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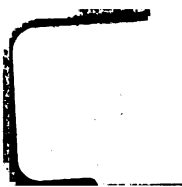
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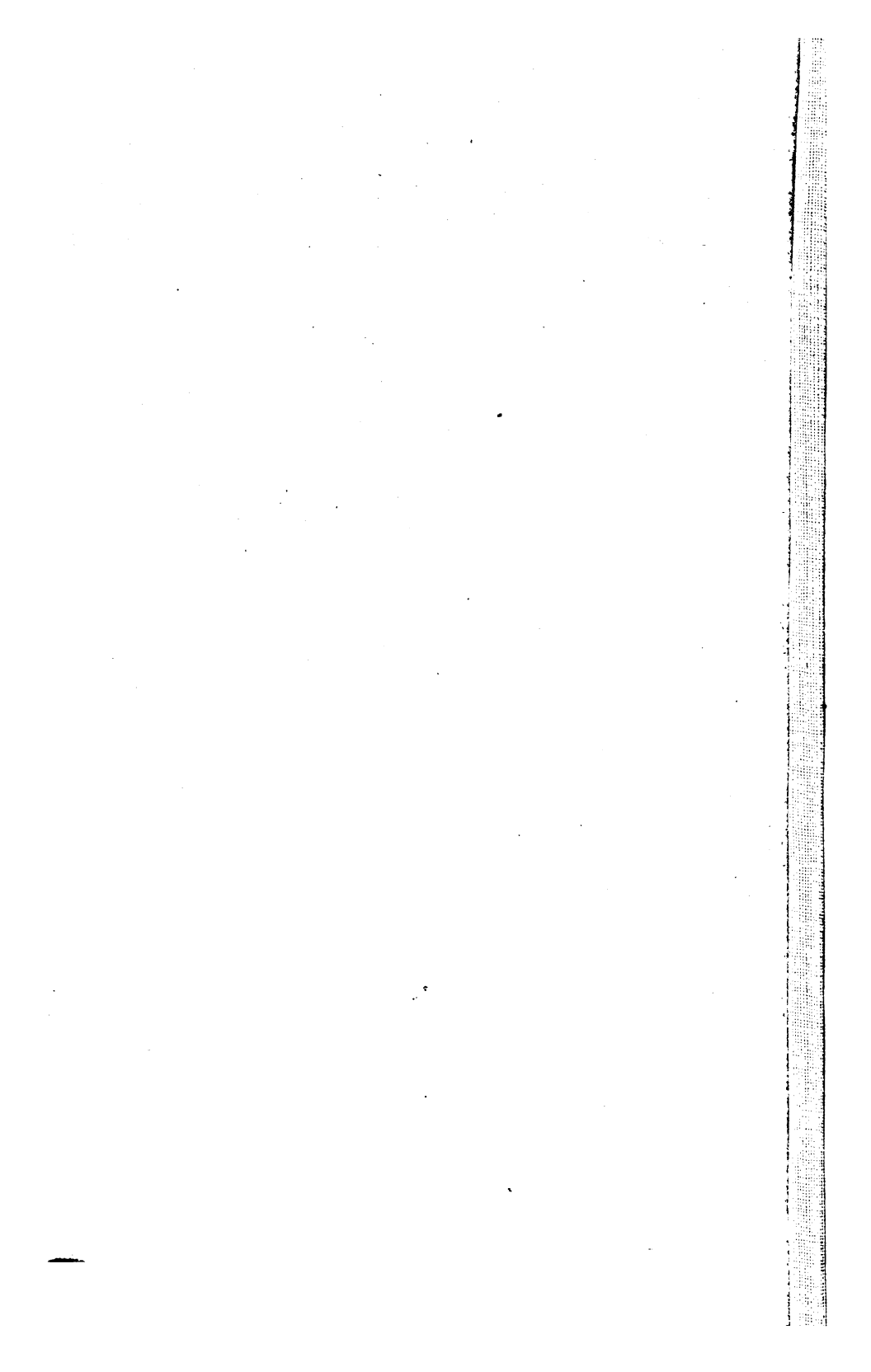
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25
ROSCOE







Wm. Custace Esq.
from The Author.

OCCASIONAL TRACTS

RELATIVE TO

THE WAR

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE,

WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED AT DIFFERENT PERIODS, FROM THE
YEAR 1793,

INCLUDING

BRIEF OBSERVATIONS

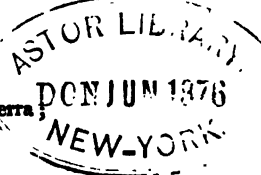
ON THE

ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY,

PROPOSED BY EARL GREY, IN THE HOUSE OF
LORDS, JUNE 13, 1810.

BY WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq.

Vedi, Signor cortese,
Di che lievi cagion che crudel guerra;
E i cor ch' indura e serra
Marte superbo è fero,
Apri tu, PADRE, e intenerisci e snoda;
Ivi fa che 'l TUO VERO
(Qual io mi sia) per la mia lingua s'oda.
PETRARCA.

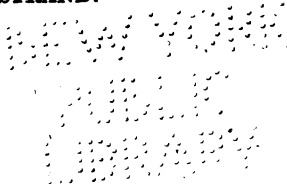


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1810.



**J. M'CREERY, Printer,
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XXIV WAR
DUBIN
MAGAZINE

ADVERTISEMENT.

OF the following Tracts, the three first were published without the name of the author, at the times of their respective dates. In thus uniting them with his later pieces, his chief object is to recal the public attention to the awful subject which they profess to discuss, and, if possible, to impress upon others, ~~these~~ convictions which the occurrences of the last eighteen years have produced and confirmed in his own mind. How far his statements and reasonings have been justified by subsequent events, the present state of Europe in general, and of this country in particular, may sufficiently shew. But whatever reception this volume may meet with, the author has thought proper to avow all that he has at any time written on this

subject, and to commit it, as far as in his power, to future times, as an appeal against the promoters of a **WAR**, as unjust in its principle, as it has been sanguinary in its progress, and calamitous in its result.

Allerton, 12th October, 1810.

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PREFACE.

Originally prefixed to the *REMARKS on the Proposals made to GREAT BRITAIN for opening Negotiations for Peace in the Year 1807.*

THAT the exercise of private judgment, and the privilege of expressing that judgment on public men and public measures, are inseparable from the nature, and indispensable to the continuance of our free constitution, few persons will be found hardy enough to deny. Without the exercise of this right, we should, as Britons, have nothing to contend for, and might be properly classed with the most oppressed vassals on the continent, under either their former or their present rulers. If this be the fact, it will follow, as an unavoidable consequence, that the more critical and hazardous the situation of the country is, the more necessary is it that such a right should be freely and fearlessly exercised. To what purpose would it be that the people should enjoy such a privilege, a privilege not granted to them, but retained by them in the very principle of their political union, and never

relinquished even in the worst of times, if, at the very season when the use of it is of the most vital importance, its exercise should be discountenanced, or its existence denied? So far, however, is this from being admissible, ~~that~~ the necessity of the public attention increases with the increase of the public dangers; and that manifestation of opinion which in times of security and repose may be a matter of indifference, becomes, in situations of hazard, a matter of duty.

It ought, however, to be fully understood, that notwithstanding the people may differ in opinion as to the nature or expediency of a war, yet, in all measures that are calculated for the defence of the country and the effectual carrying on of that war, they must cheerfully and unanimously concur. But although this be our first and most indispensable duty, it is not the whole of our duty. To presume it to be so, would be to reduce mankind to the level of brutes, that know no termination of their violence but in their mutual destruction. War, amongst civilized nations, can only be justified when it becomes the sole means of providing for the general safety, and of securing a just and honourable peace. At what period the opportunity of accomplishing this may occur, is a question on which the sovereign is to decide;

but upon which the people, as on all other subjects of government, have a right to express their opinion. On this point considerate persons may differ, not only according to their different talents, temper, and interests, but according to the different degree of information which they may have been able to obtain; and hence it must happen, that discussions on the subject of peace are the continual concomitants of a state of warfare.

Such appear to be the sacred rights to which, as subjects of a free state and a limited monarchy, we are indisputably entitled, and such the precautions and boundaries within which the exercise of that right ought to be confined. This however opens a field sufficiently large for the exercise of the greatest talents. In contemplating the history of past ages, we are attracted by the feelings common to all our kind. Man, in every situation and at every period, is, to man, an interesting object of inquiry. But in the events of the present day, we feel a much deeper concern. The objects of the past and of the present times are no more to be compared to each other in point of importance, than the exhibitions of the theatre, are to the business of real life, or the contemplation of a gallery of portraits, to the intercourse of our family and

friends. On the ardour with which the people engage in these subjects, and on the assiduity with which they obtain information and disseminate just ideas respecting them, depend, in an eminent degree, the honour, the credit, and the welfare of the country. It is the great result of this aggregate of sentiment that, in a free state, forms the character of a nation. It is by this that the conduct, not only of subordinate ministers, but of the sovereign himself, must be ultimately decided upon, and according as this result is correct and enlightened, or inaccurate and debased, the people may be said to be wise or foolish, virtuous or wicked. This is that conscience of a nation, of which every individual forms a part, but which can only be manifested in its general effects. If, in private life, it be the first duty of every person to obtain just notions of his moral conduct, it is no less the duty of a nation to erect and establish for itself such a standard, as may enable it to conduct its concerns in a manner consistent, at the same time, with its own honour and interests, and with the rights of other independent states. To assert that no such independent rights exist, is not only to abrogate that immense code of positive and written law, which has been universally assented to by civilized states, and is acted upon in all countries, as an important branch of municipal

PREFACE.

▼

law, but to libel human nature itself. If not a line of that code had ever been committed to writing, these rights would equally have existed. It is upon these principles alone, which have been so accurately investigated and so well understood, that human society can be maintained; and they who labour to overthrow them, would, if they could succeed in their blind and guilty efforts, only reduce the human race to an absolute despotism on the one hand, or to interminable anarchy and war on the other.

The love of our country, and a perfect devotion to its interests, are sentiments which every subject ought to feel; but the affections, it is said, are not voluntary, and in order to be loved and esteemed, a country must be virtuous and respectable. There may be hordes of banditti, and combinations of pirates, who may act together from the impulse of a common interest and a common danger; but esteem is a virtuous sentiment, and can only be felt towards that which is itself estimable. Degrade and debase the country, and the very sentiment of patriotism is in danger of being extinguished; not by the fault of the people, but by the misconduct of their rulers.

“ No more thy country ; but an impious crew

“ Of men conspiring to uphold their state

" By worse than hostile deeds ; violating the ends
" For which our country is a name so dear."

MILTON.

Let it, however, be remembered, that no misconduct in the rulers, or perversity in the people, can release a good subject from the obligations which he owes to the country which has given him birth. Like the attachment of a child to his parents, the bond is indissoluble. But if this be a rule of universal import, with how much greater force does it apply to this country, where there is more virtue for us to honour, more talent to admire, more freedom to preserve, and more individual happiness to defend, than in any other nation upon earth. In proportion, therefore, to the dangers with which she is surrounded, and to the errors, or the crimes, in which she is involved, will be the efforts which every real friend to his country ought to make, to relieve her from her state of degradation, and to restore her to rectitude, to honour, and prosperity. In the performance of this severe but indispensable task, he will frequently have to assume a tone of harshness and reproof, and when imminent destruction seems to await her, will warn her even by threats and denunciations from the dangerous precipice. How liable this conduct is to be mistaken, or misrepresented, as the effect of a perverse and unfriendly disposi-

tion, it is easy to perceive; nor are the present times without instances of men of the highest endowments, and best intentions, having fallen a sacrifice to such unfounded imputations. To flatter the prejudices, foment the pride, and encourage or excuse the crimes of a people, is the surest way to obtain their favour; but to weigh their conduct, and estimate their character in an impartial scale, to point out their faults, and banish those delusions in which they delight, is always an invidious, and frequently a dangerous task. In all ages, the rage of popular violence has been principally directed against the best friends and benefactors of mankind. Yet, shall it be said that the awful admonitions with which both sacred and profane history abound, and which were intended to warn a people of the calamities which impended over them, if they persisted in an idolatrous, immoral, or erroneous course of conduct, were the result of animosity, resentment, or ill-will? Is the man who points out the consequences of such an obstinate perseverance, to be considered as an enemy to his countrymen? or is not that character more justly applied to those, who treat as romantic and exploded those maxims of justice and honour, which it has been the boast of England to have so long maintained.

The same considerations which tend to shew the reason why an individual may occasionally address his countrymen in the language of animadversion and reproof, may serve also to explain another circumstance which frequently subjects him to still greater odium. Can it be allowable, it may be asked, that any person shall point out the errors or the faults of his own country and its rulers, and pass over without still greater reprobation the misconduct of other nations with which she is at enmity; the crimes of whose people and whose governments are of the deepest dye?—The answer is, that it is allowable; and for this very reason: that our country has a claim upon our services which a foreign country has not. The one bears a near resemblance to that self-examination, without which the sense of morals in individual character would soon be lost; the other is the censuring of a stranger, of whose motives we can only imperfectly judge, and for whose conduct we are not accountable. But it may be said that virtue and vice admit of degrees, and that however we may ourselves have erred, it may be proper to shew that the guilt of other nations has far exceeded our own. To what purpose? Will the crimes of others be an apology for ours? and is it desirable that we should diminish the sense of our own misconduct by comparing it with the more

enormous offences of others? This, however, is the fashion of the present day. If any one should suggest, that some particular measure of our government is of an unjustifiable or a doubtful nature, he is told in reply, to look at the conduct of our enemies. The atrocities that have unhappily been perpetrated in other countries, are continually recalled to sight; and the tyranny and crimes of their present rulers, and the debasement and subjugation of the people, serve at the same time to gratify malignity and to justify abuse. Not content with this, we are daily imposed upon by many of those who have obtained an influence over the public mind, by the grossest falsehoods, and the most absurd exaggerations. And, after all, what is the inference that we are called upon to derive from these representations? Is it that we ought to convert them into lessons of utility? That if such be the dreadful consequences of slavery, we should be doubly watchful in the preservation of our own liberties from the encroachments of arbitrary power? That if the treachery, the cruelty, and the injustice of our enemies, have excited the detestation of mankind, we should set an example of magnanimity, of lenity, of fidelity, in all our transactions, which should place us at the greatest possible distance from those whose misconduct we so justly reprobate and abhor? Is this,

in fact, the use that is attempted to be made of them? or is there not, on the contrary, too much reason to apprehend, that the enormities of others are only dwelt upon as a pattern and a justification of our own? That the commission of certain crimes, on the part of our enemies, may be supposed to render it necessary that similar crimes should be committed by ourselves? And that as long as we have not plunged into those depths of guilt and depravity which we presume our neighbours to have done, we may congratulate ourselves on our superiority, and boldly challenge the favour of heaven?

In arraigning our own misconduct there is but little reason to fear that we shall treat ourselves with too much severity; but in pointing out the errors and the crimes of others, there are some grounds to apprehend that the feelings of hostility may warp our judgments, and disqualify us from forming an impartial decision. In speaking of other governments, our praise or our censure is too often distributed, not according to their positive deserts, but according to the attachment or enmity which they manifest towards ourselves. It may perhaps be said, that it is necessary to keep up the spirit of our naval and military defenders, by frequent representations of the misconduct and the guilt of our enemies;

and that even if these be exaggerated, it is one of those pious frauds which are justified by the circumstances of the times, and the necessity of providing for our own defence. Is it then requisite that in order to excite the courage of our countrymen we must inspire them with the feelings of animosity and revenge. Have they not a sufficient motive to call forth all the powers, both of their mind and body, in the reflection that they are defending their sovereign, their freedom, and their country? The abhorrence of guilt, in itself so laudable, is of all passions the most liable to be carried to excess, and to become the unsuspected pretext of crimes yet more enormous. If, however, it should still be thought necessary to display before the British public the abominations of France, there are those who find it too consistent with the gratification of their passions, and too conducive to their profit, to suffer us to grow languid for want of their exertions. But the more impartial observer, whilst he condemns the excesses of others, will not fail to inquire into the circumstances that have given rise to them; and the professed advocate for peace will scarcely be expected to counteract his own purpose, by expatiating on the causes of dissension, and seeking for new and problematical reasons of alienation and ill-will.

In addition to these observations, it may be further necessary to remark, that although our country has the first claim to our affections and our services, this ought by no means to prevent us from regarding with sentiments of justice, and of friendship, the rest of mankind. Even the feelings of hostility against our avowed enemies should be only of a temporary nature, to be discarded from our bosoms whenever we may be enabled to induce them to a reconciliation. True patriotism is a wise and enlightened sentiment, which leads us to promote the welfare of our country by just and allowable means; but that factitious feeling which prompts us to obtain advantages by acts of injustice and oppression, is not patriotism; but the worst extreme of partiality. Can the man who has divested himself, in a great degree, of that selfishness which is almost a part of his nature, be expected to feel for the community that unjust preference which he has learnt to relinquish for himself? or will not, on the contrary, his feelings and his habits be uniform? and will he not be disposed to weigh with fairness and impartiality the different claims of all those who come within the sphere of his influence? Whilst he is just to his family and his friends, shall he, for their sakes, be unjust to his country? or whilst he is just to his country, shall he be unjust to the rest of the world?

To suppose so, is to suppose that he acts upon two opposite principles, and that when he arrives at a certain point, his virtue recoils upon itself, and becomes the very reverse of what it was before.

The truth is, that a patriot must be a virtuous man; and a virtuous man will not commit, or encourage injustice, for the sake either of himself or others. After having participated his affections with those around him, he will be anxious to promote their interests; but he will promote them in the same manner only as he would his own. School'd to the restraint of his own passions, he will not flatter and inflame those of the populace. In acting for his country, he will seek for no advantages, but such as under similar circumstances he would endeavour to obtain for himself. If, in the one case, he would not waylay and rob an unsuspecting neighbour, in the other, he would not enrich his country by piracy, violence, and spoil. In this he would do, not only what is abstractedly right, but what is truly and ultimately for the real interest of his country. This globe is a society of states; and nations as well as individuals have each their peculiar character. To grasp at temporary advantages, to oppress a weaker, or circumvent an incautious neighbour, may frequently, in private

life, be attended with success; and states and nations may, in like manner, seem, for a while, by a similar conduct, to promote their prosperity. But the foundation is unsound, and the edifice of their greatness is built on sand. By the system of Providence, and the constitution of human affairs, a continual barrier is forming against such unjust aggressions; which are counteracted by the influence of public opinion, the distrust and resentment of surrounding states, and a thousand unforeseen circumstances, that either frustrate the expected advantage, or retaliate its injustice; and not unfrequently subject the aggressor to the very evils intended to be inflicted on others. It is, therefore, only by strictly conforming to the eternal principles of right and justice, that we can consult either our own honour or our own interest; and to desert these principles when a particular occasion puts them to the test, is to exclude ourselves, by our own act, from the pale of civilized society, and to render ourselves, as it were, outlaws to the rest of the world.

Such appear to be the positive and relative duties of the subjects of a free state; but if they who obey be accountable, both to themselves and the public, for the propriety of their conduct, they who are intrusted with the executive pow-

er of a state have a still more weighty task imposed upon them. In claiming from the people a general assent to their measures, and a perfect unanimity of support, they must take care that such measures are consistent with the acknowledged laws of universal justice, and are not subversive of those first principles of morals which are antecedent to every other law of society. As man to man, there are certain duties incumbent on us, the violation of which no pretext of political necessity, or national hostility, can justify. To inculcate upon the people ideas of a contrary tendency, and to weaken their faith in the existence of political virtue, is not less impolitic than it is erroneous. That governments, as well as individuals, are actuated only by selfish motives, and that the professions which they are continually making of veracity, fidelity, honour, and frankness, are merely a cloak for their criminal views, are sentiments which it is thought a mark of penetration to have discovered, and a proof of sincerity to avow. But whatever may be thought of the sagacity of such politicians, to act upon the conviction of such sentiments is dangerous. God has not abandoned his creation; nor are the common feelings of human nature wholly extinguished amongst mankind. If there be depravity, there is yet integrity: If there be oppression, there is

yet sympathy : If there be baseness, there is yet honour : If there be treachery, violence, and rapine, there are still the inextinguishable feelings of virtuous indignation and generous contempt ; and they who direct their conduct either in public or private life with a total disregard to these truths will, whatever may be their temporary success, incur upon the whole, not only disappointment, but disgrace.

That the sentiments here attempted to be enforced, will not be likely so meet with general assent, I can readily conceive. There are some at present, who boldly deny the existence of any duties or rights between independent states. There are others, who whilst they admit that such relations subsist and have been acted upon, conceive that they are not of indispensable obligation ; but that it is allowable to deviate from them in cases in which our safety or our interest is involved ; and that as these cases are subject to no positive rule, they must be decided and acted upon according to circumstances ; or in other words, at the absolute will of the party concerned. To the former of these, I have nothing to say. Their error, I fear, is not in their judgment only. But to the latter I am ready to allow that the duties of human beings, both in their collective and individual capacities, are of a re-

lative kind ; and that precepts of absolute import must frequently be modified by various circumstances which either render their application wholly impracticable, or, if practicable, defeat their proper result. The general rule is, *Thou shalt do no murder*, but this is not to prevent me from defending myself to extremities against any one by whom I may be unjustly attacked. The breach of moral obligation is by my enemy, and not by me. But although the right of self-defence must be fully admitted, yet it is not a right of an undefined or uncertain nature, as is too often erroneously supposed, but is confined to situations of immediate danger, when defence and attack become convertible terms ; and cannot, without a total breach of moral obligation, be extended to remote probabilities, which are to be guarded against or counteracted by wise and prudent precautions, and not by becoming ourselves the offenders, and perpetrating the very crime, the intention of which we impute to others. If this were not the case, the greatest cruelties and enormities that ever were committed by tyrants and oppressors against either states or individuals, might be perfectly justified ; for what danger is so remote, what circumstance so trivial, as not to be a cause of alarm to a tyrannical, a suspicious, or a cowardly mind ? But the right of self-defence is a right of strict construction, and

as such it is considered by the good sense of our English law ; which admits of no palliatives of a crime from remote and contingent apprehensions, but requires that the peril should be imminent, and even unavoidable by any other means of defence ; and if this were not the case, the law would be of no more use in the one instance, than the rule of moral conduct would be in the other.

It must also be observed, that even these considerations, instead of invalidating the general rule that unconditionally prohibits injustice and oppression, prove only the greater necessity of its further application. Those circumstances by which we are compelled to resort to measures, which, although not abstractedly justifiable, are perfectly so in the situation in which we are involuntarily placed, can only, for the most part, arise from the errors, the injustice, or the crimes of others. But the rule is of general application. It is as imperative upon my enemy as upon myself ; and if he had not violated it, I should not have been compelled to do so. Thus the perpetration of one criminal act frequently gives rise to a long train of unhappy circumstances, which, if not always criminal in themselves (as, from the violent feelings and passions of mankind they generally are) serve to enhance the

guilt of the original deviation, and at the same time to demonstrate in the strongest light the universal necessity of a strict and inviolable adherence to the general rule.

It may however perhaps, be said, that human nature is, at the best, imperfect, and that notwithstanding all our efforts, vice and misconduct will frequently and indeed inevitably occur; but this, it is to be observed, is to be lamented, and not to be vindicated; to be branded, and not excused. Would these evils be likely to be diminished by reducing our standard of moral rectitude to a lower level? or is it not, on the contrary, only by preserving the moral principle pure and unsullied, that we can hope to prevent the total degradation and ruin of the human race? To deviate in practice from these dictates of eternal obligation, is highly culpable: but to admit of, and sanction such deviation in theory, is infinitely more so. The one is a guilty action; the other establishes a rule of guilt, and recommends it to practice in all future times. Whatever enormities may have been committed by the leaders of armies, and the conquerors of mankind, they are often less culpable than those who have recorded their exploits. In the agitation of all the most violent passions of our nature, in the conflict of hope and of fear, of glo-

ry and of shame, of self-preservation, of animosity and of revenge, atrocities have been transacted over which our humiliated sense of human imperfection would gladly throw a veil. But when the narrator of these transactions, instead of marking them with his indignation, recommends them to our notice and our imitation, as the usual and allowable course of conduct on similar occasions ; when the statesman finds his measures, not upon the primitive maxims of justice and rectitude, but on the imitation of other states, whose enormities and whose guilt are universally acknowledged ; when the moralist descends from his dignified eminence into the vulgar crowd, and lowers his standard to accommodate it with more accuracy to the level of the present day, an inroad is then prepared for every species of depravity and every kind of abuse. That guilt which was before incidental only, is then reduced to a system, and mankind become unjust upon principle, cruel and revengeful by common assent, and wicked by rule. In this situation the diffusion of the public sentiment is like the spreading of a pestilence ; the freedom of the press, instead of being an advantage, becomes a curse to a country ; and they who pretend to be the instructors become the corrupters of mankind. That the united efforts of all the friends of virtue can ever succeed in banishing

vice and error from the face of the earth, it would be preposterous to suppose ; but the operation of moral causes on the character and situation of mankind, is, even yet, but imperfectly known. To what a degree of depravity nations may fall, we have had but too many instances. To what heights of moral and intellectual excellence they may rise, we have had fewer examples ; but neither the one nor the other is to be considered as the utmost extreme of which our nature is capable. We know, however, enough to enable us to distinguish light from darkness ; and if, by the constant assertion and defence of the eternal rules of justice and morality, we cannot establish *a Heaven upon earth*, we may, at least, prevent that earth from becoming a *Pandemonium*.



THOUGHTS
ON
THE CAUSES
OF THE
PRESENT FAILURES.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1793,

BY J. JOHNSON, St. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.



THOUGHTS, &c.

THE events of the present times seem calculated to shew the weakness of human foresight. More fortunate than other nations, it has been our lot to regard the extraordinary changes that have taken place on the continent rather as occurrences that amused our curiosity, than as subjects in which we were deeply interested. Recent circumstances have brought the business home to ourselves. No sooner have we interfered in foreign dissensions than we begin to partake of their unhappy effects ; our very prosperity becomes our misfortune, for in proportion as our concerns are more widely extended, we are more vulnerable than any other nation. The

ruin is already begun. The commercial world shakes to its centre—Is it yet possible to abate the shock or restore its equipoise ?

It cannot surely be forgotten with what self-complacency we have for some time past dwelt upon the splendid pictures of national felicity which have been so industriously held up before us. Alas ! we little thought the scene was so quickly to change, and that the voice of exultation was only a prelude to the deep requiem of national ruin. The cup of prosperity, like that of Tantalus, was, it seems, filled too high, and is now emptying itself even to the very dregs.

That our prosperity was fallacious is now too apparent, but whether it was necessarily and unavoidably so, is yet to be considered. Those who have attributed it to the talents and virtues of a single man, would do well to consider whether he who reared the building, would not have known of what materials it was composed, and have sheltered it from those rude blasts and hostile shocks which it was ill able to bear—Slight as was the superstructure, the foundation was strong, and with proper precautions there is little doubt but the whole might yet have courted the applause of our countrymen, and been the admiration of foreign nations. An extensive manu-

facture of almost every article of human accommodation ; an unlimited command of markets ; an unembarrassed intercourse with all our foreign possessions, were the real and substantial advantages we enjoyed. Public and individual prosperity gave rise to public and individual confidence. Money diminished in its value. The legal rate of interest could in few instances be obtained. Paper was preferable to gold ; and the presumption of responsibility was itself a capital.

In accounting for the unfortunate reverse which we now experience, it is not difficult, in the first place, to perceive that our present misfortunes originate from certain pre-disposing causes in our commercial situation, operated upon by certain external events. The commerce of the country, conducted as it has been for many years past, might have been conducted for many years to come. On the other hand, had the trade of the country been confined to a less compass, or the sign of credit been more substantial than paper, we might possibly have taken a part in the dissensions of the continent without its producing such unhappy consequences to ourselves. To the concurrence of these circumstances we are to attribute the evils we now feel. The materials that compose our prosperity, though undoubt-

edly of a very precarious and inflammable nature, had long existed, and might with due care have been preserved to an indefinite period, but no sooner did we kindle the torch of war, than its first spark dissipated them in air.

Public misfortunes are sometimes traced to their causes with difficulty; but in the present instance their origin is too apparent to be overlooked by the most incurious observer. An effect extending as generally as the British empire must have as general a cause. Private misconduct may have increased, but has not occasioned the evil. A nearer attention to particular facts will not only evince the truth of the foregoing observations, but will enable us to trace step by step, the progress of the present calamity.

Ever since the acknowledgment of the independence of America, which was dreaded long before it took place, as an event that was to be the ruin of the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain; that commerce, and those manufactures, have been gradually and steadily increasing. A trade has been opened with America herself, now she is free, which, whilst she remained subjected to us, we should probably never have enjoyed. The productions of our West Indian possessions have been conveyed to this

country with a regularity, interrupted only by the partial disadvantages of unfavourable seasons, or the inevitable dangers of navigation. The trade to Africa has been carried on for a few years past, with an avidity naturally arising in the minds of mercantile men, from the apprehensions that it would not long be suffered to continue; and with advantages resulting from the very restrictions which they contended would be its destruction. The manufactures of this country have in the mean time found a market directly or indirectly in almost every part of the world. The superior excellence of the articles, and the extent of the sale, have operated with an action and re-action that have given the British manufacturer a decided advantage over every competitor.

The medium by which this extensive trade has been conducted is paper credit; a medium, which alone is equal to the emergencies of so quick and so remote an intercourse. The simple barter of commodities is the first stage of commercial dealing. The interchange of mercantile articles for a sign of value generally allowed and understood, as specie, is the second. But that which has facilitated the intercourse between remote parts, and given life and energy to trade, is the substitution of paper credit to the actual and substantial

delivery of money or commodities. Were trade restricted to the latter, the necessary articles of return might not always be at hand, or if ready, might not suit the purposes of the dealers. Were it bounded by the actual quantity of circulating specie, it must be confined to very narrow limits indeed. But a bill of exchange is a mode of payment of all others the most applicable to the purposes of commerce, and as the extent of credit must generally keep pace with the extent of trade, it is a medium of intercourse which may be presumed to be always equal to the object which it is intended to answer.

For some time past, and particularly of late years, the trade of this country has been mostly conducted through this channel. If a British cargo be sold in foreign parts, the amount is generally returned in bills on London. If a foreign cargo be sent to Great Britain, bills are drawn on London for the amount. If an African merchant dispose of his slaves in the West Indies, the same mode of payment is adopted. In short, scarcely a transaction now takes place in the mercantile world but it produces a bill of exchange; and these bills are drawn payable at various dates, according to the nature of the trade, or the positive stipulation of the parties, frequently at two or three months; not seldom

at six, nine, or twelve months ; and in the African trade, bills are often drawn, payable at the end of one, two, and even three years.

Let us for a moment consider the principle on which this extension of credit is founded. A cargo of goods is sent to be disposed of at a foreign market ; the price is agreed upon, and the only question that remains is, as to the time and mode of payment. The purchaser observes, that before payment be made, he ought to have time allowed him to convert the whole, or at least a considerable part of the goods into money ; and that without this indulgence, his immediate capital will not allow him to purchase so large an amount. The seller, though desirous that the buyer should take his cargo, objects that he cannot either remain himself, or detain his ship and crew at a considerable expense, till the time the purchaser proposes to pay. In this difficulty a method is devised which perfectly reconciles the views of each of the parties. The purchaser, calculating at what time he may reasonably expect the returns from the re-sale of his purchase, offers to the seller an order upon some creditable person residing at the place to which the seller is next bound, or at that of his usual dwelling, payable when he supposes he may have received sufficient from the goods in question, to replace in

in the hands of the person drawn upon, the amount of the bill. Thus the West Indian planter, whose bills for slaves purchased by him are at the longest date in use, presumes, that before he ought to be called upon for payment, the labor of those slaves either in the whole or in part, should be brought to market. The seller seeing the necessity of the case, agrees to the proposition, and bills are drawn for the amount accordingly.

But, although the seller thus consents to postpone the payment until a certain period, it does not follow that he is prevented from employing the capital of the cargo, which he has just disposed of, in another adventure. During the continuance of public tranquillity trade gets into known and certain channels. The characters of mercantile men, in every part of the world, are duly and accurately estimated, and a good bill is as easily judged of by a well informed merchant, as a good piece of money. The person who has received payment for his commodities in this form, applies his bills, or such of them as being within a reasonable time of payment are deemed negotiable, in the purchase of a fresh cargo, with which he again proceeds to market. Those at a longer date are generally called out into capital, by discounting; and the amount

has again circulated through half the world, long before the bills become due.

To the duration of a system of trade of this kind, public tranquillity is however indispensably necessary. The slightest apprehensions of war affect it in its most vital parts, and vibrate through its remotest extremities; but when the demon raises his iron wand, the whole fabric vanishes like the work of enchantment. The enormous but unsubstantial capital, by which the productions of the world were so expeditiously transferred from region to region, sinks in a moment to a few hard guineas. A slip of paper which was yesterday worth a thousand pounds, is to-day of no more use than when it was in its original state. The current which had so long flowed on in one uniform and steady direction, suddenly rolls back, and overwhelms in ruin those who had ventured on its surface in the fullest confidence of safety and success.

That such are the inevitable effects of war, we already know by fatal experience; but it may not be uninteresting to examine for a moment the precise manner in which a war operates in depressing commercial credit. Though purporting to be a mere personal security, a bill of exchange is universally received as a sign of pro-

perty ; and presupposes a degree of stability in the drawer of it, adequate to the amount.—

Whatever therefore tends to diminish the value of property in general, tends to diminish the credit of bills of exchange : for although the persons liable may have been competent to the performance of their engagements under the existing circumstances at the time they entered into them, it is evident they may be rendered unable to fulfil them by the depreciation of their property in consequence of subsequent events.—

Hence, in all cases of public commotion, a general impression is made unfavourable to paper circulation ; and this is again increased beyond measure by observing the actual effects produced by a war, not only on every particular branch of commerce, but upon almost every different species of property. For instance, the bills drawn in the West Indian islands derive their principal credit from the idea that the persons who issue them are possessed of considerable estates there ; so that in case it should be necessary to call upon them, they will be able to discharge the amount. But one of the probable consequences of a war is, that these islands may be captured by the enemy. The actual value of these estates is therefore considerably diminished ; and the credit of the owner, and consequently that of his circulating bills, sinks in proportion.

The situation of the manufacturer is yet more critical ; the enormous expense of his buildings and machinery, the astonishing number of workmen employed by him, amounting in some instances to several thousands, the constant payment of duties,, and the purchase of raw materials, pour out his property daily, with the rapidity of an immense torrent, which can only be supplied by a perpetual and adequate influx. Of this he is deprived by the war, which closes the market for his commodities, or positively prohibits his sale. From that moment, the very property which he lately considered as his capital and his riches, producing to him a princely revenue, becomes not only unproductive, but an expense and an incumbrance upon his hands.— Even those persons who may be supposed to be the most effectually sheltered from the effects of the calamity, often feelingly partake in its consequences. Estimating his property at the value it bore a few months since, a stock-holder may have entered into positive engagements, which, at that time, he conceived himself able to make good, but when he is called upon to fulfil them, he finds that by the fall of the funds he is unexpectedly deprived of perhaps a fourth part of his capital; and that at a season when no possible help is to be obtained from any other quarter. The value of every different species of property

being thus inevitably reduced, the sign of that property also sinks in the same proportion. But the least diminution of full and perfect confidence, is the total destruction of paper credit—unlike a piece of substantial coin, a bill of exchange is of no value, unless it be negotiable for its full amount, nor is there any medium between the receiving it for the value it purports to bear, and its absolute and final rejection.

Perhaps at no period was the commerce of these kingdoms so critically circumstanced, as at the commencement of the present war. The disturbances on the continent had afforded an opportunity of aggrandizement, which had been improved by the merchants and manufacturers of this country with equal skill and avidity. The popular idea that the purposes which the minister had in view were incompatible with a war, and the apparent uniformity of his determination to avoid all interference with continental dissensions, gave rise to a degree of confidence, which had extended the trade of Great Britain far beyond what it had been at any former period. That confidence had even afforded an opportunity for enterprise and adventure, in which mercantile men are perhaps of all others the most apt to indulge.—Hence undertakings were begun without substantial capitals, and being once en-

gaged in, were obliged to be supported by a circulation of paper, which exceeded what was requisite for the legitimate purposes of commerce, and rendered any interruption still more dangerous. In this situation an alarm at length took place. Its symptoms were apparent. At the first suggestions of war, a thousand apprehensions arose in the mind of the trader. The disappointment of his due returns; the danger of the failure of foreign houses; the safety of our West Indian possessions; the fear of internal commotion—all conspired to destroy the general confidence in that mode of intercourse on which the commerce of the country so intimately depended. The faith in negotiable paper instantly diminished; specie again rose to its full standard; and the discount of bills at any remote date, was effected with difficulty. These were sufficient indications of the consequences that would ensue from an open declaration of hostilities. War was, however, determined upon, and the scene of commercial havoc immediately begun. Suspicion took the place of confidence, and occasioned the very evils which it dreaded. Houses of high mercantile character, but of widely extended connexions, were obliged to stop payment. With the supporting trunk fell the dependant branches; and the failures of the capital were necessarily accompanied by many

others throughout every trading town in the kingdom. The insolvency of the merchant led on the ruin of the manufacturer, and by his misfortunes a large portion of the labouring class of the community, are now deprived of the only employment, which by education and habit, they are capable of exercising.

Such is the great outline of our present disasters ; but other circumstances concur to fill up the melancholy picture. The manufacturer is not only hurt through the sides of the merchant, but is at the same time prevented from sending out his goods in their usual course to foreign markets ; and hence he is left with his effects on hand, and consequently is disappointed in his expected returns for such as he has before disposed of. Even when these returns arrive, if they consist of bills of exchange, they are no longer negotiable. If they consist of produce, that produce is not saleable. Such is the comparative scarcity of specie, and of that kind of paper which alone can be circulated in these times of suspicion, that the produce remains on hand, not only from the depression of commercial spirit, but from the mere want of an adequate medium of exchange.

To attempt to estimate with any degree of pre-

cision what proportion of the trading capital of these kingdoms is thus suddenly annihilated, would be to no purpose. But when it is considered, that almost all bills drawn in foreign parts are payable at a distant period; that not only the foreign trade of the country is principally carried on by means of this system, but that in all mercantile transactions, the substantial medium of gold and silver, has long been by general consent supplied by the easier mode of paper circulation; that the trade of the country has thereby been extended to a degree far beyond what would otherwise have been practicable, insomuch, that in many cases returns are made three or four times, where, without it they could not be made once; we may form some idea of the amazing property now locked up in bills of exchange; a property which was intended to have been applied in the discharge of engagements, entered into in full confidence that the national tranquillity would remain uninterrupted.

There are some perhaps, that may attempt to account for the present calamities, by attributing them entirely to the wild speculations of individuals, and the improper extension of paper negotiation. But solitary instances of misconduct will not account for national disasters. Uninfluenced by the causes before stated, the unsuccessful

ful enterprises of a few daring adventurers, would on this, as on former occasions, have been confined in their operation to the ruin of themselves, and those with whom they were immediately connected: but where is the rank of society that does not feel the effects of the present shock? Had the returns in bills and produce, received from abroad, been convertible into specie as heretofore, there is every reason to believe, that many persons who are now obliged to solicit indulgence from their creditors, or to resign the management of their concerns into other hands, would have been enabled to make good their engagements.* To stop the circulation of the blood, is as fatal as to exhaust the veins. Situated as we were with respect to continental politics, the trader had perhaps a right to presume that the commerce of this country would remain uninter-

* We may here be allowed to cite the authority of Mr. Pitt, who very lately asserted in the House of Commons, that "There are many instances of individuals in this country being brought into difficulties, not from any want of solid capital, or inability to answer all the demands upon them, but from sudden demands being made which they were unable to discharge all at once."—"That for these reasons there were many individuals in this country compelled to stop payment, although there was no doubt that on making up their accounts, their solvency would appear."

Mr. Pitt's Speech, Star, 13th April, 1793.

rupted ; and this idea was strengthened from time to time by the national sentiment, and by declarations from the Minister to the same effect. Who was to foresee from these grounds that the commerce of Great Britain was shortly to be sacrificed to the shutting up of the Scheldt ?

The fatal wound was given by the war ; but it was yet perhaps in the power of the Bank Directors to have softened the pressure of the calamity. Trustees of a great trading company, instituted not less for the public good than for private emolument, it might have been expected that they would have stepped into the breach, and have given the weak and wounded individual, time to escape, at least with life. That they would have set the great example of confidence in the riches and the resources of the nation ; an example which would have been followed by others, as far as circumstances would have permitted. Instead of this system of conduct, which would have united generosity and prudence (virtues nearer allied than it is generally imagined) the directors pusillanimously led the way in the general discomfiture, or were active only in enriching themselves from the spoils of those who had fallen in the struggle. To have continued the discounting of bills according to their usual custom, would have been only negatively com-

mendable, it might have been expected that they would have done it with more liberality. The national credit would thus have been supported until other resources had arrived; and if it had fallen at last, it would have fallen gradually, and not with the ruin which it has now exhibited. In this conduct they would have consulted their true interest, but those resources which, timely and prudently applied, might have kept the torrent within its proper bounds, would, now the barrier is broken, be swept away in the attempt. What is not to be obtained from the public fund, private aid can not supply; and even were such assistance practicable, what are we to expect from the claims of friendship, whilst the Minister holds out an inducement of upwards of ten per cent. by the new loan. Thus deprived of both public and private support, the ruin of the merchant seems inevitable; and his only consolation is to find, that the same record that exhibits his name to the public eye, recounts on its opposite page the victories of Great Britain and her allies over the French.

It is possible however, that these hasty pages, written under the impulse of first impressions, may have magnified the extent of the calamity; and that the author may have mistaken a partial, for a general evil.—It is possible too, that the

fury of the storm has abated, that the ship has again righted, and that all we have now to do is to clear away the wreck. Alas, the information of every hour forbids the indulgence of such a hope. In the manufacturing parts of the kingdom, the number of persons thrown out of employ is already alarming, and is daily increasing to such a degree as alone to call for national interference. Instead of having arrived at the period of our misfortunes, there is reason to believe that we are only in the first stage of them. The weighty failures that daily occur, are each of them necessarily to be followed by many others of inferior consideration, until the whole history is to be finally collected, in the increase of the poor, the deficiency of the revenue, and the general oppression and misery of the people.

After having taken this short view of the subject, we may perhaps be allowed to ask, whether it may not yet be practicable for individuals, or associated bodies of merchants, by means of temporary expedients, to relieve themselves and the public from the immediate pressure of misfortune? The attempt is commendable; but when the magnitude of the evil is considered, it is to be feared that all exertions of this kind must fall greatly short of their intended object. It is evi-

dent from the foregoing observations, that the much greater part of the actual trading capital of the kingdom, amounting to a sum of which few persons have formed an adequate conception, is at this moment rendered totally useless; and what is to fill up this sudden void? The idea of restoring the general loss of credit, by expedients founded on the credit of individuals, is a solecism; and actually to produce the requisite specie is beyond all bounds of possibility. One remedy alone is adequate to the evil, and happily that remedy is yet in our power. War is the cause of our calamities—Peace is the only effectual cure.

Let any dispassionate person examine into the part we have taken in assisting our allies on the continent, and candidly say, whether the services we have rendered them, be equal to the injury we have done to ourselves. Let us however forget what is past, and regard with a steady eye our present situation. Driven within the limits of their own country, and probably on the brink of a civil war, the French are no longer formidable; and the object for which Great Britain engaged in the war is now fully accomplished. To proceed further would be to defeat the end which the Minister professed to have in view,

and to destroy, not to preserve, the balance of power in Europe.

It is not difficult to foresee an objection, on the part of those who are unwilling to acknowledge the truths here attempted to be enforced. If our misfortunes, say they, are occasioned by the war, whence comes it, that the same events have not taken place under the same circumstances on former occasions? The short answer to this, is a denial of the truth of the proposition contained in the question. The same event has always taken place whenever the country has been involved in a war. Have we so soon forgotten the disasters occasioned by our contest with America? The depreciation of landed property, the fall of the public funds, and the innumerable inconveniencies attendant on the destruction of credit. The evils which this country then experienced, and those which we now so intensely feel, are similar in their nature, and different only in degree; our present sufferings being augmented by many causes, some of them perhaps imaginary, but not on that account less aggravating. The enormous extent of our commerce, whilst it increased the probability of the explosion, rendered the consequences of it, when it once took place, more general. Again, it was presumed that the war was not, as on former

occasions, to be carried on in distant parts of the globe, for ascertaining the boundaries of a desert, or determining the right to a barren island, but was supposed to be commenced by an enraged and powerful enemy, and to be waged at our own doors, for the purpose of depriving us of whatever we held dear and sacred. Even at the first onset we were witness to a vigorous attack upon the territories of an ally, with whom we stand closely connected in our commercial transactions. In addition to these considerations, no artifices were spared by the advocates for a war, to impress on the minds of the people at large, an idea that many of their countrymen—men of rank, of talents, and of influence, were attached to the cause of our adversaries. Insurrections were alluded to, that never had existence, and plots were denounced, that finished where they began—in the fertile brain of the informer. Such are the peculiarities that distinguish this war from those in which Great Britain had before been engaged, and it would be astonishing indeed, if exertions so industriously made, and so pointedly calculated to destroy all confidence amongst us—political, moral, and commercial, should totally have failed in their effect.

To enter upon an inquiry at this day into the advantages or disadvantages which any country

derives from a very extensive foreign trade, would be to no purpose. Probably in the result of such a question it might appear, that there is a certain limit, beyond which commerce ceases to be lucrative, and increases the risk without increasing the profit. But a train of events, of which it would be useless to point out the causes, have brought us into a situation in which that commerce, whether abstractedly desirable or not, is become indispensable to us. Those who condemn the enterprising spirit of our merchants, the immense extent of credit, and the consequent circulation of paper, would do well to consider that a sum not less than seventeen millions is annually to be raised in this country, for what are called the exigencies of the state. A sum not raised without some difficulty even in the most flourishing periods of our commerce. However desirous we may be to tread back our steps from the dangerous eminence to which we have unawares attained, and to regain once more the safer track that winds through the forsaken valley, we find ourselves surrounded on every side by precipices that forbid our retreat. The diminution of our commerce will occasion a diminution in the revenue, which must be supplied from other sources, and it is not difficult to foresee what these sources are. Hence, perhaps, it is eventually not less the interest of the landed, than of the trading part of the community

to support a system, which, however introduced, is not only become essential to our prosperity, but to our existence; and heartily to concur in the common cause, if not till we conquer the difficulties that surround us, at least till we can effect a safe and honourable retreat.

It is not uncommon to find those who have been the loudest in extolling the riches, security, and happiness of the nation, attempting to console themselves, under the pressure of misfortunes which they cannot but feel, by attributing the present calamity to the improper extension of paper credit: according to their idea the present is only the subsiding of a tumour which had increased beyond all bounds, by which the body politic was soon to be restored to a better state of health. But may we be permitted to ask these political optimists, what then was the origin and support of this unexampled series of prosperity, which it seems this country has of late years enjoyed. Without the assistance of paper credit, can it be pretended that the manufactures of Great Britain could have been circulated in foreign parts, or the produce of foreign parts been imported into Great Britain, even to one fifth of the extent that has actually taken place? or would the minister have been enabled to exult monthly, and weekly, over the amount

of his revenue? Either this felicity was ideal and visionary, or being real and substantial, has been incautiously undermined and overthrown. Whatever may be thought of our days of exultation, certain it is, there is nothing imaginary in our present calamities. They try the bone, and search to the marrow. Numbers, who but a few weeks since might reasonably have expected to have been able to console themselves, under every possible change of public affairs, with the certainty of a sufficiency to procure the conveniences, and perhaps the elegancies of life, sink at once under the pressure of unforeseen misfortunes—or, if they yet look forward, it is only with dreadful apprehensions of being dragged to perish in the cold precincts of a prison, to gratify the caprice of a resentful creditor. Still more distressing, these misfortunes are often participated by a numerous family, educated to enjoy that competence which they have long been entitled to expect. As the calamity descends through subordinate classes, its victims, though less distinguished, are more numerous; and the poor disbanded mechanic sits amidst his weeping family, and curses his useless hands that are no longer able to procure them food. Such is the situation of the country; nor does there appear, whilst the present war continues, a probability of amendment. It is confidence alone that can give the first sti-

mulus to this general torpidity ; but is that likely to be produced by persevering in a war, whose commencement was the immediate destruction of that confidence ? A war, whose consequences no human wisdom can foresee, and which derives additional terrors in the view of all thinking men, from its real object being hid in mystery and uncertainty. Wounded as the commerce of this country has been, it can only be expected to revive by degrees, nor will it soon, if ever, attain that eminence it has of late experienced. But the restoration of peace would again give rise to some portion of that mercantile faith which was so general before the commencement of the war. Bills payable at more distant dates would again be gradually called out into circulation, and like an influx of new wealth, would daily increase the general commercial capital. Foreign markets would again open for our manufactures, the obstructions on navigation would be removed, and we might again take our rank amongst the trading nations of Europe ; but before this can be effected, it is probable rivals may have started up ; our exclusive advantages may be at an end ; and we may too late have to lament that we were foolish enough to take a part in a fray, when we should have been employed in gathering our harvest.

STRICTURES

ON

MR. BURKE'S TWO LETTERS,

ADDRESSED TO

A MEMBER OF THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1796,

FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW,
LONDON.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE urgency of the occasion will sufficiently explain the author's motives. The aspect of the times is critical. Moments are pregnant with the fate of years. The most trivial weight thrown into the scale of reason and moderation, may now influence that decision, which it may ever afterwards be impossible to reverse.

The writings of Mr. Burke are addressed to the passions. Many can feel, but few deliberate. Hence their influence is extensive. The impulse of the imagination is instantaneous; that of the reason is slow—hence they cannot be too soon counteracted.

To Mr. Burke no apology is due. He has written on a great national question. He has connected it with his character, his conduct, and his principles. These therefore necessarily become the subject of animadversion. He has

done more. He has endeavoured to prevent the return of Peace, not by cool argument, but by a national insult. He has not only judged, but acted for others. He has therefore given to every individual a right to enter his protest, in doing which the author is convinced he shall be joined by the voice of **MILLIONS.**

STRICTURES, &c.

SOME faint hopes have at length arisen of the termination of a war, which for nearly the space of four years, has been conducted on all sides with a prodigal waste of human life, unexampled in history. At this awful moment, when PEACE "sits like the light down upon the thistle's beard," and suspense agitates the bosom of every human being not totally insensible to the sufferings of his nature, Mr. Burke, the hermit of the present crusade, has once more raised his voice, and by every motive of persuasion, of denunciation, of terror, and of reproach, has endeavoured to stimulate the expiring embers of national resentment into a new flame.

Of the many extraordinary circumstances of which the close of the eighteenth century is doomed to be a melancholy witness, it is not the least extraordinary, that a man of polished man-

ners, of apparent humanity, once the advocate of liberty, and still assuming the character of a friend to the human race, should become the avowed and ostensible instigator of a most sanguinary and cruel war. A war which one of his noble disciples has not blushed to denominate *bellum internecinum*; as if among mortal beings, and mortal concerns, hatred alone were to be immortal. Still more extraordinary is it, that this advocate of contention should, by early education, by a fervid imagination, by long habits of controversy and intercourse with society, be enabled to bring forwards his cause with something like the appearance of argument, and should hope to counteract, in the bosom of the nation, not only the returning emotions of pity, but the deep-felt sense of its own losses, and its own sufferings.

These things, even in these times, are extraordinary; but there are others that are portentous; and if the former cannot be observed without surprise, the latter cannot be contemplated without horror. Mr. Burke's *Thoughts on the French Revolution* were the signal for a foreign war. The two letters now published appear to be the harbingers of civil commotion. In these letters, representations the most degrading to human nature, are incessantly spread be-

fore the imagination, and the sound and healthful faculties of the mind are debauched by being brought into contact with enormities, exaggerated even beyond poetical sufferance, but which, if true, ought to be covered with the veil of eternal oblivion. Ideal crimes of the most heinous nature are hypothetically introduced, but amply dwelt upon.* A certain class of our fellow subjects are pointed out for proscription, by number, if not by name.† Suspicion, the ingredient that decomposes society, is poured out in unceasing streams; the ruler is opposed to the subject, and the subject to the ruler. The majority are called upon to persecute the minority, and the minority are not only incited to rebel, but flattered with the prospect of success.‡ In attaining the object on which Mr. Burke has unhappily bent the wishes of his declining age, the destruction of the French Republic, all intermediate considerations are to be overlooked, all the common feelings of human nature extinguished. Not only individual comfort is to be relinquished, and individual safety endangered, but the very existence of the country is to be put upon the hazard of the die; and to such an extreme is this infatuation carried, that in order to effect the destruction of the sys-

* Letters, p. 120.

† Ib. 67.

‡ Ib. 68.

tem established by the French nation, to whom we are told, "the will, the wish, the want, the liberty, the toil, the blood of individuals is as nothing," we are called upon, in no ambiguous language, to adopt a similar system ourselves.*

In the name of manhood, in the name of humanity, in the name of common sense, let us for a moment divest ourselves of the wizard's spell, and endeavour to throw a gleam of light on the mist with which he has surrounded us. What is the irremediable offence, the crime never to be atoned, that the people of France have committed against this country? Is it in having effected a change in their government by the revolution of 1789? They differ from ourselves in this instance, only by being a century behind us. Is it in subjecting their monarch to the axe. The British nation set the example. Is it in any inherent and unprovoked hostility of the new government against this country? On the contrary, the new government, proud of having emulated us by the establishment of a limited monarchy, held out to us the right hand of fellowship, yet unpolluted with blood, and looked with an anxious eye for the encouragement, the

* Letters, p. 181.

countenance, and the alliance of England. A thousand times repulsed by the sullen silence of the government, they still flattered themselves that the people of England could not be uninterested when the cause of liberty was triumphant, and the standards of England, and of America, were united with those of France, in the Hall of the National Assembly. Is the in-expiable crime of the French their attack on our allies, their rapid successes, and the annexing the conquered countries to their own dominions? Let it be remembered that this spirit of subjugation was not apparent in the early part of the revolution, when a declaration was made that the French nation would for ever relinquish the idea of extending the territories they then possessed, and would confine themselves to their acknowledged limits; and that no such intention appeared till their frontier was closely surrounded by formidable enemies, and offensive and defensive war became convertible terms. Let it also be remembered, that the Royal and Imperial Vultures, which then hung over, and have since divided Poland, had already in idea gratified their ambition with the spoils of dismembered France, and the Duke of Brunswick, had published an avowal of his purpose, worthy even of the pen of Mr. Burke. If, under such circumstances, the French have resisted force by

force, and have ultimately carried the seat of war into the dominions of their enemies, the preservation of their political and individual existence by the fair contention of arms, is not to be imputed to them as a crime. Without greatly encroaching on that hatred to an enemy, which political establishments require, it may surely be allowed, that the French have not immoderately abused that power with which the fortune of war has invested them, and that the capture of Brussels and of Amsterdam, bore little resemblance to that slaughter and devastation which was to have taken place at Paris, had the pious purpose of the allies been crowned with success. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that of the countries thus occupied by the French, some have requested to be united to the Republic, by the general voice, not equivocally expressed; and that even where this has not been the case, the provinces acquired by the enemy have not been ravished from *this country*; but that on the contrary, without our losing a single inch of territory, we have availed ourselves of the difficulties under which the French have laboured, to strip them of their detached possessions in almost every part of the globe.

Where then are we to seek for the causes of this unalterable aversion, this implacable resent-

ment against the French nation? a resentment which it seems is to be carried to such an extreme, that the same globe of earth on which Providence has placed us, can no longer suffice for our common residence?—Whence is it that the adverse shores of France and of England are to frown on each other eternal hostility? and that the spirit of revenge is never to be appeased, till of two powerful nations, one shall be destroyed, and the beasts of the forest shall take up their abode amidst the habitations of elegance, of industry, and of peace?

I anticipate the reply of the abettors of the war. It is sufficiently discoverable in the letters now before me. The excesses, and the crimes, and the conquests of the French may be pardoned, their attack upon Holland, their overweening pride, nay even their declaration of war against this Country are only objects of secondary consideration, matters of aggravation rather than of offence;* but it is their principles, and their maxims, that are to be the objects of the eternal enmity of all civilized states. It is the Jacobinical doctrine of the rights of the people with which we are to maintain perpetual war. Whether the people exist for the rulers,

* Letters, p. 130.

or the rulers for the people, is the question. A question which admits of no medium in reply. The French have decided it for themselves. They have perhaps decided it wrong. Granted. Let us then be at war with their opinion. Let us confute it by every rational mode of discussion; and if you please, let us at all events resolve to adhere to that which we have ourselves avowed. But, it is said, if a pacification take place with France, this will be impossible; such is the insinuating nature, such the rapid progress of the new doctrines, that they have already made Eighty thousand converts, even in this kingdom.*—This information is alarming. The more so as it certainly induces a suspicion that these doctrines may have some foundation in truth; but at the same time it proves that there has been something essentially wrong in the measures we have hitherto taken to prevent their progress. If, among four hundred thousand thinking men, whom Mr. Burke considers as the natural representative of the people in this country, eighty thousand have in a few years imbibed the opinions of an enemy, with whom during that time we have carried on a most sanguinary war, and have become, to adopt his own expression, “pure Jacobins, utterly incapable of

* Letters, p. 67.

"amendment,"* it is at least evident, that war is not the proper mode of precluding the dissemination of such opinions. Let us endeavour to prevent the rising of the sun, or to stay the swelling of the ocean, for the material world is in some degree subject to the control of mechanical force; but the intellectual world scoffs at the weak attempt which would limit its operations by the coarse and clumsy restrictions of bolts, and chains.

In a discussion of this nature, it is needless to enter upon the question, whether France or England gave the first cause of umbrage, and thereby occasioned the war. Nor, though I entertain an opinion on the subject, do I care how such question may be decided. The point now in debate is, whether there be such a permanent ground of offence, such a cause continually operating, as may justify us in the sight of God and of the world, in prolonging the contest of blood, after a fair opportunity is afforded us of bringing it to a termination. If there be, let those who call for a continuance of the war come forward and point out by some clear, distinct, and comprehensible arguments, the motives and reasons of the war. Let the

* Letters, p. 67.

specific object for which thousands are to bleed, and millions are to suffer, he made known to those whom it so deeply concerns, and let us no longer be left like intoxicated brawlers, to contend against each other in the dark, without being able to explain the cause of the fray.

If we look for reasons of this kind to the letters under our consideration, we are not only miserably disappointed in our researches, but there does not appear to be even an attempt to lay before us one rational ground, one fair and manly argument, either for the commencement or the continuance of the war. All is vague, illimitable, and void. Horrid forms surround us on every side; they appear and retire in dreadful succession; but as often as we attempt to grapple with them, they elude our grasp. The unformed spectre which Mr. Burke has raised from the tomb of the murdered monarchy of France, "which subsists on the poison of "other states," "which has conquered the finest "part of Europe, and which distresses, dis- "unites, deranges, and breaks to pieces all the "the rest,"* is at once the cause of our enmity, and the object of our vengeance. But a war against poetical fictions is yet more absurd

* Letters, p. 6.

than a war against opinions. Figures of rhetoric may amuse, but they may also mislead, and on this subject it is dangerous to be led astray. We next find ourselves at war with an *armed doctrine*, "which has by its essence a faction of "opinion, and of interest, and of enthusiasm, in "every country."* That doctrines are propagated by arms, is at least as doubtful as that their effects may be prevented by arms. Fanatical conquerors, professing a particular faith, may by force of arms occupy the territory of those professing another faith; they may even compel the vanquished to an exterior conformity to their rites, and a compliance with their customs; but it will scarcely be contended, that the sword, whilst it hews down their bodies, operates conviction on their minds. One of the most deep-rooted principles in human nature is a resistance to the argument of force. The danger from an armed doctrine arises therefore only from arming to oppose it. Let the parties agree to lay aside their implements of destruction, and the doctrine is unarmed, and must rest its further propagation on the inherent truth of its dogmas, or the vigilance and acuteness of its professors. To contend against *armed doctrines*, and *unformed phantoms*, is not however

* Letters, p. 22.

the business of those who direct their conduct by the plain dictates of common sense, and who feel a reluctance to sacrifice their substantial enjoyments, and agitate their bosoms with factitious passions, when folly or when fear give the word of command.

If it be possible from the letters before us to ascertain in any degree what is the specific nature of the war, we may denominate it a *war of dignity*. "We have been proud and great," says Mr. Burke, "and great because we were proud;"* but the pride of states, like the pride of individuals, is often both the symptom, and the cause of their ruin. Pride, founded on arrogant pretensions to superiority, is the ready method of incurring universal hatred, if not of exciting universal contempt. "Power, and eminence, and consideration, are not things to be begged," says Mr. Burke, "they must be commanded."† But Mr. Burke should have considered, that power, and eminence, and consideration, are all relative, and imply submission, and inferiority, and weakness, in the rest of mankind. To command them, is in other words to maintain perpetual warfare. "To ask them as the alms of your enemy,"‡ is to ask your enemy to permit you to trample on his head.

* Letters, p. 1.

† Ib. p. 2.

‡ Ib. p. 2.

But if it be in vain to search through these letters for the substantial causes of offence, and the real grounds of the war, they are by no means wanting in every species of incitement that can prompt the giddy and stimulate the proud to the prosecution of it. What is wanting in reason is made up in passion; what is deficient in argument, is compensated by abuse. Nor is this abuse directed wholly against the enemy. We ourselves freely participate in it. If British courage has been personified by the character of the Bull-dog, Mr. Burke is his master, who plies the trade of blood, and by menaces and blows, excites the fury of the animal against the object of his wrath. The very apprehension of the inefficacy of his attempt, though he has hitherto had little cause of regret on that head, rouses all his powers. His disappointment in not being gratified with the blood of the persons lately accused of high treason, breaks out in the grossest libel against the public administration of justice in this country, that modern times have witnessed. Nay, "ALL THE PARTS OF THE STATE," if we may believe Mr. Burke, "have their correspondence and consent." "In proportion as we approximate to the poisonous jaws of anarchy, the fascination grows irresistible. In proportion as we are attracted towards the focus of illegality, irreligion, and desperate enterprise, all the

venomous and blighting insects of the state are awakened into life.”* Such is the picture which Mr. Burke exhibits of the present state of his country. Can the pencil of Jacobinism itself improve its touches, or heighten its deformity?

But if such be the language in which Mr. Burke addresses his friends whom he incites to the attack, by what new figures of speech does he designate his enemies, the objects of his vengeance? His genius here expands itself in a congenial element, and “existence sees him spurn her bounded reign.” As far as the enormities of France can supply him with materials—alas, no scanty storehouse—whatever is hateful in manners, whatever is detestable in guilt, is disgustingly spread abroad, to stink, and putrify, and infect mankind. With a contempt of all discrimination as to the different parties who have obtained the superiority in France, and which are in some instances as opposite as light and darkness, Mr. Burke characterizes the whole, through their various successions and changes as a horde of Regicides, Atheists, Assassins, and Robbers; existing only by rapine, and thirsting only for blood. The temperate conduct of the

* Letters, p. 22.

adherents to a limited monarchy, who stemmed for a while the tide of public fury, and now sleep in death, or languish in dungeons, for their faithful support of the throne; the disinterested and philosophic character of the Girondists, who, though favourable to the establishment of a republic, opposed the ferocious purposes of the Anarchists, and sealed their sincerity with their blood; the monsters who succeeded to the supreme authority, who trampled upon the ashes of virtue, and of science, and attempted once more to brutalize mankind; and the present rulers of the French nation, who firmly opposed themselves to the wasting arm of despotism, and by one virtuous effort called down upon themselves the blessings of imprisoned and hopeless thousands, and atoned in a moment for half their crimes; all these gradations and varieties of virtue and of guilt, under the indiscriminating pencil of this great artist, are marked only by one sombre hue, and appear uniformly and consistently detestable in every variation and in every light. It is of no avail in his estimation, that the energy of virtue was opposed to the energy of guilt. His hatred for the dying patriot, is as sincere, as for the triumphant villain who consigns him to death. The guillotin, though its execrable motion has long been stayed, is with Mr. Burke in full requisition; and to

such a preposterous extreme does he indulge his rancour, that he has not blushed to represent the members of the present French directory, as measuring their diplomatic residents with their eye in the moment of audience, "and fitting to their necks the slider of the guillotin."

Assertions so unqualified, enforced with language so vindictive, and calculated to impress upon the public mind so extreme a spirit of resentment, can scarcely be attributed by charity itself even to the errors of a great and generous mind. No—magnanimity spurns such factitious support. Generosity dwells not with greedy joy on the motives of dissension. Revenge and hatred are allied to fear, the concomitant of little passions and of little minds.

Let the contempt of mankind be directed against the follies of the French, and its indignation against their crimes ; but let us not obstinately and unjustly close our eyes to the faults or the failings of their enemies. When the veil of prejudice shall be withdrawn, and the passions that now vibrate in every direction, shall be at rest with the bosoms which they agitate, the future historian, whilst he marks with severe fidelity the excesses of the French, will trace with impartiality the circumstances from whence

they arose. Divested of temporary hatred, and of local affections, he will combine effects with their causes, and will not attribute to national caprice, or inherent depravity, those errors which an imperious necessity, or the operation of external causes, have in a great degree occasioned. He will inquire whence it could happen, that a system of reformation, begun under auspicious omens, and promising to terminate in the mutual happiness of the sovereign, and of the people, should experience so fatal a reverse. Why a whole nation who vied with each other in a noble enthusiasm to sacrifice their hereditary honors, their possessions, and their lives, to the welfare, the safety, and the happiness of their country, should, within so short an interval, disgrace it by the active commission, or the passive endurance, of unheard of cruelties, and unexampled crimes. His researches will soon discover to him an adequate cause for so extraordinary a change; and he will perceive, that in proportion as the surrounding states of Europe attempted to control, to terrify, and to conquer the French, their internal dissensions became more dreadful, and their national character more ferocious. The possibility of an union between those who were secretly dissatisfied at home, with those who were in open hostility abroad, will appear to him as the fruitful germ of all subsequent evil. He

will see that jealousy and distrust led the way to hatred and persecution; and that the apprehension of the enemy produced in the interior of France, that devastation and carnage, which its armies in vain attempted to produce on the frontiers. Nor will he, whilst he apports to each of the contending parties his proper share in the common guilt, forget the numerous instances of heroic virtue, and of generous devotion to the welfare of their country, to which the revolution has given rise. He will trace in the successive events of the war, the difference between the soldier who combats for liberty, who superadds to the strength of his body the energy of his soul, and the mercenary troops, in whose estimation safety, and danger, hold the place of conquest, and of defeat, and will from thence deduce maxims of the highest importance, and lessons of the surest instruction for future times.

It is indeed a great instance of condescension in Mr. Burke, that professing, as he does, so decided an opinion, that an accommodation with France cannot take place without the total ruin of this country, he should enter so fully into the discussion of the mode and ceremonial of the proposed treaty. As he is not deficient in acuteness, he perhaps perceived that the reasons

with which he was enabled to enforce his leading propositions, were not of the most substantial kind; and that they might not despise the auxiliary aid derived from the mere difficulties of a negotiation. Accordingly he has employed a great part of his first letter in demonstrating, that we ought by no means to exhibit any symptoms of an earnest desire for peace; "There is in reserve," says he, "not only something of dignity, but a great deal of prudence too."* Thus, whilst the stream of human blood is flowing, and widows and orphans may be numbered in the same succession as the minutes on the clock, this advocate of propriety deliberately undertakes to prove, that it is not our province to move the first leg. Unfortunately for Mr. Burke, his maxims are rather framed for his immediate purpose, than applicable as rules of general conduct; otherwise it is difficult to conceive how he can condemn the unceremonious forwardness of the British ministry, and at the same time not approve of the dignity with which, it seems, the French received our offers. They appear indeed, by what strange fatality I shall not undertake to determine, to have entertained precisely the same opinion with

* Letters, p. 26.

Mr. Burke, and to have acted up to his own precepts. They were aware of those deep maxims of policy, "That a peace too eagerly sought, is not always the soonest obtained"—"That the discovery of vehement wishes, generally frustrates their attainment," and that "your adversary has gained a great advantage over you, when he finds you impatient to conclude a treaty."* They despised, it seems, our glances and our oglings, they received not with impassioned transport, the official note of Mr. Wickham, nor stooped from the height of their dignity to partake our offered embrace. Why Mr. Burke stigmatizes as "vicious," and as "insolent" in the French Directory, † a mode of conduct so consistent with his own rules, and which he so strongly recommends to the British Ministry, we must leave it to some future letter of his promised series to explain.

But alas, if we examine more narrowly the intercourse which has taken place with the French directory, on the subject of Peace, we shall find no such reason to congratulate them on their superior skill in the diplomatic science. New to the profession, nor yet initiated into the

* Letters, p. 25.

† Letters, p. 24.

mysteries of state, it is indeed scarcely to be expected that they should rival the veteran negotiators, who for a long course of years have transacted the political concerns of Europe. Hence their official proceedings have not yet acquired that stately march, that decorous verbosity, which distinguish in general the memorials of the allied courts. Entering unceremoniously into the subject, they openly expose their wishes and their views, and whilst they decline an intercourse with Mr. Wickham, they confess that it is only because his powers are inadequate to conclude the treaty. Persevering, however, in the same line of conduct, they mark out explicitly to the British ministry, how far the authority with which they are invested, allows them to cede any part of the territories conquered by the French arms, and how far they are restrained from it by the *existing laws* of the Republic. They do not indeed state, as Mr. Burke has incautiously asserted, that "this law, like those of the Medes and Persians, cannot be altered or abrogated,"* but they give the British court to understand, that the Directors, acting in that capacity, cannot, without treason to their country, listen to propositions that contravene it; thereby implying, that so far as the territory annexed to the Republic

* Letters, p. 44.

is to be the object of debate, the decision must be referred to the Representative body, and thus preparing the way for the removal of an objection which they were aware the British ministry might not foresee.

Whether this attempt at negotiation answered the purpose for which it was intended on the part of the British ministry, or whether they conceived that the difficulties suggested by the directory were insuperable, does not appear, it is not however understood that any further measures were adopted by either party towards a negotiation, till the request was made, on the part of the British ministry, to be permitted to send a proper person to Paris, to open a negotiation for Peace. This request was immediately complied with, the directory, with their usual promptitude, having only required that the person authorized to *negotiate* should also have full powers to *conclude* the treaty ; thus affording another instance of that indecent precipitancy, so repugnant to the slow and stately maxims of Mr. Burke.

In the preceding observations, it was not my intention to have dwelt upon the inconsistency of Mr. Burke, in condemning in one page that course of conduct which he so warmly recommends in another. That field affords a richer

harvest for criticism, which I meant to have reserved to a future occasion. Besides, the political inconsistency of Mr. Burke is an old topic, and in this respect he is sufficiently countenanced by many of the politicians of the present day, who glory in their apostacy, and persecute the cause to which they had not virtue to adhere. On this occasion, however, Mr. Burke has abused the licence which politicians have of being inconsistent, and has imparted to his new offspring a germ of destruction which anticipates its growth. If he deal out his abuse of the regicide directory of France, he displays no lenity to the regular governments of Europe. If he accuse the French of unbounded ambition, and unlimited views of aggrandizement, he confesses that the regular governments of Europe have manifested similar views, to the injury and degradation of their cause,* and, with more truth than civility, denominates them *a society for pillage*.† If his admiration of the sacred character of majesty be extreme, he scruples not to endanger it by criminal suggestions, and to degrade it by representing it as too favourable to the objects of his invincible hatred.‡ If he never mentions the name of Mr. Pitt without a degree

* Letters, p. 148. † Ib. 149. ‡ Ib. 31, 124.

of respect which borders on adulation, he accuses almost all the measures of his administration, with a freedom which few of that minister's adversaries have hitherto exceeded. Whilst he contends for the absolute extinction of the Republic, and the restoration of the ancient mild and beneficent monarchy of France, as essential to the peace and welfare of England, he confesses, that the animosity of the French to this country originated in the old government, and had manifested itself long before the revolution took place.* If, in short, he inflict a poisonous wound with his teeth, he bears in his body the ingredients for a cure.

Let us however be candid, and confess, with Mr. Burke, that in a treaty of Peace, during the struggles of an existing war, the conduct of the different parties must vary according to their relative situation. But let us at the same time inquire, upon more solid grounds than Mr. Burke has done, upon which of the parties, on the present occasion, the circumstances of the war impose the duty (for the preservation of human life, and the prevention of human misery, is always a duty) of making the first advance

* Letters, p. 173, and seq.

towards a reconciliation. The only just ground of a war (for an expedition of plunder, aggrandizement, and rapin, is a robbery) is the preservation of the existence and welfare of a state. Hence all wars are in fact defensive, and are represented as such by every Government which affects to consider itself as a civilized institution. But though such be the ultimate cause of any legitimate war, yet, in its actual conduct, it will assume the appearance of attack as well as of defence, nor can we in all cases determine that the party who first resorts to actual force is the aggressor. The origin of an offensive and a defensive war is therefore the same, but in a negotiation for Peace, the distinction is of essential importance, and the conduct of the party who presses upon the other, at the instant of time when a negotiation is proposed, will be different from that of the party pressed upon at the same period of time. That which in the former would be dignified, in the latter would be pusillanimous or dangerous. I shall not hazard much in asserting, that whatever may be the motives of the war with France, it has in its conduct been, and notwithstanding the conquests of the French have thrown their enemies to a greater distance, still continues to be, a war of attack. The original ground upon which the French took up arms, was to secure to themselves the

liberty of adopting such form of Government as they might think proper; the assertion of the allies was, that such form of Government was inconsistent with the safety of surrounding states. Hence it follows, that until the allies are either convinced that the cause of their alarm was unfounded, or conceive it more expedient to incur the risk of its being realized, than longer to suffer the actual inconveniences of the war, the French have not the choice of an alternative. They may conquer, or they may die, but it is impossible for them to comply with the demands of the allies without a political *felo de se*. Nor have those demands at any time been reduced to so precise a form, or adopted by such general consent amongst the allies, as to enable the French to judge, by what particular sacrifice, or upon what precise terms, they might hope to pacify the resentment of their enemies. They have no Helen to deliver up to the confederates; their destruction has been hitherto the only price of pacification. If a peace is therefore ever to be established between this country and France, the preliminaries of negotiation must commence with ourselves, who by manifesting such disposition, incur no immediate disadvantage or risk; for I lay out of the question those prospective evils which the telescopic eye of Mr. Burke can perceive, in acknowledging

the *existence* of the Republic. We can cease from making, or joining in, the direct attack; but the French cannot cease from being attacked, but at the will of their enemies. These considerations may shew with what propriety Mr. Burke represents the measures now adopted for effecting a pacification, as derogatory to the character of the British government; and with what decency he adverts to the avowal of that disposition by his majesty's speeches, "as lures, "and oglings, and glances for peace," and "a violent passion for a relation to the regicides." Hence too we may be enabled to judge of his exaggerated statement of the arrogance of our enemies, whose patience it seems, "is worn out with the importunity of our courtship."* This courtship, it is true, has not hitherto been of the most soft and conciliatory kind—its tale has been told from the mouth of the cannon, and its gentleness displayed at the point of the bayonet: the scene of its dalliance has been the field of battle, and the unfathomable depth of the ocean its bridal bed.

In considering the obstacles to the establishment of peace, it is evident that objections may

* Letters, p. 26.

occur of different kinds, which consequently ought to be differently arranged, and are entitled to different degrees of importance. Of those objections, Mr. Burke's letters contain no inconsiderable assortment; but as he is much more remarkable for the *facundia*, than the *lucidus ordo* of the Roman poet, so it is no easy matter to reduce them to their proper class. His treasures, and his gems, are poured out with the profusion of eastern munificence; but selection and arrangement are necessary before they can be properly examined, and appreciated. In the execution of this pleasing task, we may therefore be allowed to remark, that those objections to peace which ought to occupy the first place in our consideration, are such as hinge upon the original grounds and reasons of the war, and which I have before denominated the permanent causes of offence. These substantial and tangible objects of our comprehension are however rarely discovered amongst the glittering assemblage of Mr. Burke; and are perhaps reserved to embellish the pages of his future letters. Of a secondary class are such causes of offence, as easily admit of explanation or compensation; thus, declarations of war, with all other avowals of animosity and hostility, considered merely as such, may be repaired by the adoption and avowal of contrary sentiments. Of a third and

less important class, are the objections to pacification which may arise from the complicated, and in some degree novel state of national concerns, and which mutual good temper and forbearance can perhaps alone remove. But there is a fourth kind of argument discoverable in Mr. Burke's letters, which is founded on the consideration of the present state of this country, both positively, as affecting its own situation, and relatively, as compared with the present situation of France.

"If we look to nothing but our domestic condition, the nation," says Mr. Burke, "is full even to plethory."* How then, it may be asked, can we be relieved from this dangerous disease so expeditiously as by a continuance of the war? In this state of things we look neither to grounds of offence, nor practicability of pacification, we look forward only to that which may be advantageous to us, and finding that war is the most direct method of relieving us from this oppressive superabundance, and being assured that "nothing can banish it from the world," † we resort to it, neither in hatred, nor in anger, but simply to relieve us from the greater dangers which a long

* Letters, p. 14.

† Letters, p. 109:

course of prosperity and indulgence, has brought upon us. By this process, we scour off the violent and acrimonious humors of the state, and reduce the body politic to that calm and temperate system, which may be called the perfection of civil society. In this view, a war with France, or with Spain, or with any other power, will be found equally expedient, provided our enemy can exert sufficient strength to administer the remedy required. We seek a quarrel with the intent of losing a little blood, and our antagonist must therefore be endowed with as much muscular strength as will answer our purpose. That being effected, we shall return him thanks for his trouble, and assure him we bore him no particular ill-will. This pacific termination is not, however, in the present situation of things, likely soon to arrive. With our "imports and "exports amounting to forty-six millions," and "our inland trade still more substantially nutritive to the state ;"* it is difficult to say *when* we may be able to dispense with this healthful drawback on our prosperity, which cannot be dismissed in our present circumstances, without the immediate danger of an apoplectic shock.

Such are the reasons for the continuance of

* Letters, p. 79.

the war, arising from a consideration of our positive situation, and from which none can dissent but such as are either wilfully blind to the overflowing prosperity that surrounds us, or weak enough to object, on the score of *morality*, to our alleviating our own evils at the expense of other people. The consideration of our relative situation with France confirms in every point our previous decision—we are rich, and luxurious; they are warlike, adventurous, and necessitous; therefore we ought to continue the war. We have nothing to gain, they have every thing to lose; therefore we ought to continue the war. "In their government every thing is referred to the production of force; it is military in its principle, in its maxims, in its spirit, and in all its movements."* Our government is, "that which pursues the greatest variety of ends, and is the least disposed to sacrifice any one of them to another, or to the whole,"† therefore we ought to continue the war.

It has been a favorite mode of argument with those who are more solicitous to propagate their opinions, than to investigate the solidity of the grounds on which they are founded, to reason

* Letters, p. 178.

† Letters, p. 176.

from analogies, and to substitute for the character of the moralist, that of the poet. This mode is often successful. Dissatisfied or perplexed with the contemplation of the actual subject, the mind seizes with pleasure on the collateral illustration, and without coldly inquiring into the exact degree of resemblance, admits that conviction from the imagination, which it had refused to the reason. It is on this principle, that in discussing the question of our relative situation with France, recourse has so often been had, to the idea of *a house in flames*, which it becomes the duty of the neighbourhood to extinguish, for their own preservation. If these may be called *arguments*, Mr. Burke has in one instance attempted, at considerable length, to demonstrate the justice and necessity of the war, by comparing the establishment of the Republic in France, to a nuisance, erected by the possessor on his own ground: and the allied powers to the vicinage, who may probably be injured by such erection. If Mr. Burke had been conscious, that our interference in the internal concerns of France, would have borne the test of inquiry upon the general laws of nations, why has he resorted to an argument deduced merely from municipal law? Writers on subjects of general polity have not been silent on those causes, arising from the internal concerns

of a state, that give to surrounding states a right of interference, and Mr. Burke, without resorting to the side-props of analogy, might have gratified his readers by the information, that *cannibalism* is in itself a sufficient cause of provocation to all mankind,* and whilst he demonstrated, from historical authority, the inherent disposition of the French to that crime, might, in vindication of the conduct of the allied powers, have alleged the example of Hercules, who is said to have compelled their ancestors to desist from it. He might have given additional weight to his cause by the authority of Lord Bacon, who thought it a sufficient reason to make war upon the natives of America, "Because they were looked upon as people proscribed by the laws of nature; inasmuch as they had a barbarous custom of sacrificing men, and feeding upon man's flesh."† It is true, subsequent writers are of opinion, that *some previous inquiry* is necessary before force be in such cases resorted to. Whether Mr. Burke was apprehensive he might

* "To this let us join the practice of *cannibalism*, with which, in the proper terms, and with the greatest truth, their *several factions* accuse *each other*. By cannibalism, I mean their devouring as a nutriment of their ferocity, some part of the bodies of those they have murdered," &c. *Letters*, p. 105,

† De Aug. Scient.

fail in producing a thorough conviction in the minds of his readers, that the French were a *nation of cannibals* ; or whether he did not chuse to rest so important a part of his cause, on the jarring authorities of civilians and commentators, is uncertain : but instead of arguments of this nature directly applied, he has resorted to the illustration before mentioned ; on the propriety and justice of which few words may suffice.

“ There is a law of neighbourhood,” says Mr. Burke, “ which does not leave a man perfect master of his own ground. When a neighbour sees a new erection in the nature of a nuisance, set up at his door, he has a right to represent it to the judge, who on his part has a right to order the work to be staid, or if established, to be removed.”* It would be tiresome to point out the numerous instances of discordance between this suppositious case, and the establishment of a new form of government in France. The former presupposes an established rule of law, which positively decides, *by past experience*, what is or is not a nuisance ; the decision of which rests with the judge : the latter is confessedly a new case, and whether it may or may not prove in-

* Letters, p. 113.

jurious to the neighbourhood, and that in a greater degree than when it subsisted under a different form, remains to be tried. In the former case the question depends on the locality of the nuisance; its being "set up at a man's door" is certainly a sufficient reason for expecting it to be removed; but the latter is a nuisance of *opinion*, and our cause of complaint is an *apprehension* that such *opinion* may eventually prove more convincing than our own; for which reason we modestly request our neighbour will relinquish his opinion, to allay our fears. "In describing," says Mr. Burke, "the nuisance erected by so pestilential a manufactory, by the construction of so infamous a brothel, by digging a night-cellar for such thieves, murderers, and housebreakers, as never infested the world, I am so far from aggravating, that I have fallen infinitely short of the evil."* But the constitution of France is neither a *manufactory* nor a *brothel*, nor a *night-cellar*, but a *rule of political and civil conduct*, adopted by a nation for the regulation of its internal concerns, professing to be founded in nature and in reason, rejecting the imputation of immorality, and disavowing all sentiments of hostility towards foreign states. If such con-

* Letters, p. 116.

stitution tend to the happiness of the people, neither the law of nature nor of nations, authorizes foreign powers to prevent its operation. If it prove the source of misery, depopulation, and national weakness, our interference by arms is equally reprehensible.* But to suffer ourselves to be deluded to the attack by collateral and partial resemblances, would be to imitate the stupid animal which aims its horns at the fluttering of the red flag, till the mattador fixes the deadly weapon in his head.

In the estimation of Mr. Burke, whatever measures the French adopt, whether for pacification or hostility, are causes of outrageous offence. Every exertion of the war, adds fuel to his enmity; every attempt at negotiation only increases his wrath. In the requisition of the Directory, that the British envoy "should be provided with full powers to *negotiate* a peace, and to *conclude* it definitively be-

* "Neighbouring nations are never concerned at the mischief which befall one another from their own domestic broils and quarrels: the weaker have no reason, because they are secure from being enslaved; they that are equal in strength think of gaining a superiority by it; and the stronger, of purchasing an easier conquest."

"tween the two powers,"* Mr. Burke can only perceive an insidious attempt to detach us from our allies, and "to induce us, at the very first and preliminary step, to be guilty of that perfidy towards our friends and associates, with which they reproach us, in our transactions with them, our enemies." "On such conditions," says he, "we cannot even dispatch our emissary, without danger of being charged with a breach of our alliance." In order to place this part of the question in its fair and proper light, it will be necessary to take a hasty view of the origin, the progress, and the present state of this alliance, by which it seems we are bound to continue the war, till it becomes the interest of every other power to demand a cessation of it: and impartially to inquire, whether we have deserted our allies, or our allies have deserted us; whether a compact, which has been broken by three-fourths of the contracting parties, be obligatory upon the rest; and whether such of the remaining parties, as have repeatedly avowed their intention of evading it on the first occasion, can with justice complain of any other state which may adopt a similar conduct.

* Letters, p. 61,

The commencement of hostilities against France was distinguished by a union of power, in all its combinations, hitherto without precedent in the civilized world. By land, and by sea, an impenetrable barrier was drawn round that devoted country. A general intercourse and participation of all the requisites of warfare, gave to the combined powers a degree of strength, which far exceeded the simple aggregate of their separate force. The steady and determined valour of the German character; the discipline and military reputation of the Prussian; the naval power, the riches and the resources of Holland; the vigilance and promptitude of Sardinia; the gallant and reviving warlike spirit of Spain and Portugal; the preponderating influence of Russia; the personal chivalry of the Swedish monarch, emulous of his warlike ancestor, Charles XII. and the well-tryed strength of Great Britain, respectable in every point, but invincible by sea, gave to the allied powers, not the promise, but the certainty of success. The motives by which these powers were led to adopt a system, in many respects so incompatible with their own peculiar views and interests, were of the most powerful nature. To such as lay contiguous to the frontier of France, the apprehension of immediate danger to their respective states; to others, the wounded feel-

ings of near relationship; and to all, the dread of an example of public energy, so dangerous to the repose of despotic states. These, and many other incentives, though distinctly felt by the separate powers, were, however, with difficulty reducible to such specific propositions as might meet the general consent, and form an acknowledged bond of union. After innumerable negotiations, these difficulties were found to be insuperable, and the glaring defect of a general compact, professing to aim at one great and specific purpose, has been partially supplied by treaties between some of the allied powers, and by memorials and manifestos, varying in their objects, and their language, according to the varying circumstances of the times. What the particular tenor of these treaties may be, has been sedulously concealed from the world; but the result of some of them has betrayed their purport, and the alliance of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, against France, was propitiated in the blood of Poland. The treaty of Pilnitz, which has also in some degree transpired, may further mark the spirit of those associations, which, under the mask of securing the religion and independence of civilized states, aimed only at the subjugation and dismemberment of Europe. The manifestos to which this contest has given rise, are documents of a more public nature,

and are to be considered as a homage to public opinion, avowing the intention of the party under the existing circumstances; but without either the solemnity of a treaty, or, in many cases, the reciprocity of a mutual engagement. Of the many pieces of this nature, published by the different courts, that which seems more particularly to have attracted the approbation of Mr. Burke and his friends, is the joint manifesto of the Emperor and the king of Prussia, of the 4th of August 1792; a production of considerable length, and which may be called an historical sketch of the French Revolution. In this piece that revolution is considered under four different points of view.

I. As it personally regards his most Christian Majesty.

II. As it respects the French Nation.

III. As it respects the princes of Germany.

IV. As it respects the tranquillity of Europe, and the happiness of all nations.

Of these general heads, it is only the last which undertakes particularly to define the grounds, upon which independent, and unallied nations, (under which class Great Britain may be enumerated) are presumed to enter into the purposes of the allies. The reasons there al-

ledged are, that the French Government (although then existing under the form of a limited monarchy) was "a planned system of anarchy, "tending to dissolve all political society, and a-
 "bounding with *inexpressible danger*." "That the
 "king was without power, the nation without an
 "army, or what amounts to the same thing, hav-
 "ing no army properly disciplined, and exhibit-
 "ing to their neighbours, and above all to their
 "allies, nothing but *the shadow of power*." To
 remedy these, and other grievances, it is de-
 clared to be the purpose of the two allied states,
 "to re-establish in France order and public secu-
 "rity; to cause the persons and properties of all
 "those who shall submit to the king, their lawful
 "sovereign, to be protected; to punish, in a
 "striking manner, all resistance to their arms;
 "and to give up the city of Paris to the *most*
 "*dreadful and terrible justice*; from which no-
 "thing can save it, as well as all the other cities
 "which may render themselves its accomplices,
 "if the *least insult*, or the *least outrage*, is offered
 "to the king, the queen, or the royal family."

This manifesto, which was instantly followed
 by those dreadful convulsions at Paris, that, to
 use an expression of Mr. Burke, *hurled the king*
from the throne, and that terminated only in the
 death of the monarch, and the destruction and

ruin of his unfortunate family, was, it seems, received *by Mr. Burke and his friends*, as the creed of their faith. "It was to the principles of this confederation, *and no other*," says he, "that we wished our sovereign and our country to accede, as a part of the commonwealth of Europe. To these principles, with some trifling exceptions and limitations, *they did fully accede*. And all our friends, who did take office, acceded to the ministry, whether wisely or not, on the faith, and on the principles of that declaration."

Such, then, are the grounds and principles, upon which, *as Mr. Burke always understood the matter*, the British nation acceded to the war. I shall not enter into the region of probabilities, and inquire how far the establishment of the ancient government in France, and the sackage of *Paris, and the other cities* of that country, may yet be in the power of the allies to accomplish. My present object, is only to shew how far this manifesto, which, and which only, Mr. Burke considers as the foundation of our alliance, ought in reason and justice to operate in preventing us from entering into a treaty for a separate peace. Taking it then for granted, that Great Britain has acceded in the amplest manner to the terms of this memorial, it must at

the same time be allowed, that the immediate ground and inducement of that alliance, was the *promised assistance and co-operation of those powers with whom the engagement is made*. That object, which the united efforts of *any two* of the contracting powers might be unable to accomplish, might be presumed to be attainable by the united efforts of the whole; and the withdrawing of *one of those powers* from the common league, alters and overturns the very basis and principles upon which it is founded. The defection of the king of Prussia is not a precedent for us to follow, for we cannot infringe a treaty which is already inefficient and nugatory. I will, however, relinquish this obvious and striking proof of our competency to establish with honour, and strict fidelity, a separate peace.—Mr. Burke will himself supply us with yet more satisfactory and irresistible reasons for the adoption of that measure. Written at different periods of time, and thrown together with interlineations of new matter, on the urgency of the present moment, the letters before us afford in their detached parts, full materials for their own refutation. His second letter is an ample comment upon the flagrant violation by the allied powers, of *every compact under which they engaged in the war*. Their mutual jealousy, their dangerous ambition, their treacherous

friendships, are dwelt upon with peculiar vehemence.* "The whole war," says he, "has been but one error. It was but nominally a war of alliance. As the combined powers pursued it, there was nothing to hold an alliance together. There could be no tie of honour in a society for pillage." "The partition of Poland offered an object of spoil in which the parties might agree. They were circumjacent, and each might take a portion convenient to his own territory. They might dispute about the value of their several shares, but the contiguity to each of the demandants always furnished the means of adjustment." "But the spoil of France did not afford the same facilities for accommodation. What might satisfy the House of Austria in a Flemish frontier afforded no equivalent to tempt the cupidity of the king of Prussia. What might be desired by Great Britain in the West Indies, must be coldly and remotely felt as an interest at Vienna." After having dwelt at great length on the ambition, the rapacity, and the inconsistent views of the allies, he adds, "The moment this war came to be considered as a war merely of profit, *the actual circumstances are such, that it never could become really a war of alliance.*" If

* Letters, p. 149.

the war neither is, nor ever can become, a *war of alliance*, Mr. Burke will perhaps on some future occasion, condescend to inform us *what kind of a war* it is ; and what are the obstacles that prevent us in point of justice, honour, and fidelity, from effecting, if it yet be possible, a peace for ourselves.

In preventing, as far as lies in his power, every measure of a pacific tendency, Mr. Burke is indefatigable. If he cannot oppose it by mountains, he will, in the paroxysms of his wrath, heap up pebbles, and cement them together with the rakings of the kennel. No species of opposition is too absurd, no mode of enforcing it too abusive, for him to employ. Fearful that his representations should fail of success with the ministry, he appears to flatter himself with the hope of preventing the negotiation, by deterring any person from undertaking the embassy. The folly of such an attempt might have passed unnoticed, had not the manner in which it is enforced, called for particular reprehension. The first indication of his purpose, appears in the offensive and unwarrantable manner in which he adverts to the ambassadors from the different courts of Europe, now resident at Paris ; " these ambassadors," says he, " may easily return as good courtiers as they went ; but can they ever return from that de-

“grading residence loyal and faithful subjects;
 “or with any true affection to their master, or
 “true attachment to the constitution, religion,
 “or laws of their country? There is great dan-
 “ger that they who enter smiling into this Tro-
 “phonian cave, will come out of it *sad and seri-*
 “*ous conspirators; and such will continue as long*
 “*as they live.* They will become true conduct-
 “ors of contagion to every country which has
 “had the misfortune to send them to the source
 “of that electricity.” * The Danish ambassa-
 dor, through whose interference the safe con-
 duct was obtained for our present envoy, is re-
 spectfully denominated, “one of those unhappy
 “gentlemen in whose persons royalty is insulted
 “and degraded, at the seat of plebeian pride,
 “and upstart insolence.” † Having thus pre-
 pared the way, he soon afterwards singles out
 the specific object of his attack, and anticipates
 the infamy of the man, who may be so lost to
 shame, as to take upon him the impending treaty.
 At the time Mr. Burke wrote, he could not in-
 deed attach the disgrace to the name of a person
 not then determined on; but he defined with
 precision the character which was ever afterwards
 to be applied to him, he prepared the badge of
 disgrace which he must ever afterwards wear.

 * Letters, p. 34, 35.

† Letters, p. 49.

"Whoever," says he, "goes to the Directorial
 "presence under this passport, with this offen-
 "sive comment and foul explanation, goes in the
 "avowed sense of the court to which he is sent;
 "as the instrument of a government dissociated
 "from the interests and wishes of the nation, for
 "the purpose of cheating both the people of
 "France; and the people of England. He goes
 "out *the declared emissary of a faithless ministry.*
 "He has perfidy for his credentials. He has
 "national weakness for his full powers. *I yet*
 "*doubt whether any one can be found to invest*
 "*himself with such a character.* If there should,
 "it would be pleasant to read his instructions on
 "the answer which he is to give to the Directory,
 "in case they should repeat to him the substance
 "of the manifesto, which he carries with him in
 "his portfolio."* To the astonishment, no
 doubt, of Mr. Burke, such a person has how-
 ever been found; he has proceeded on his em-
 bassy, he has been received with testimonials of
 friendship, and acclamations of joy.† The

* Letters, p. 55, 56.

† "The English embassy" says one of the French papers (*La Quotidienne*), "will appear to posterity one of the great-
 "est events of the present age. It will not be deemed unpleas-
 "ing if we dwell on the details. On the way from Calais to
 "Paris, the presence of an Ambassador coming to negotiate a
 "Peace, caused the most lively sensation amongst a people
 "who are tired under the scourge of war," &c.

only symptoms unfavourable to the great object of his mission, are from that Jacobin party, who perform in France the same office as in England is undertaken by Mr. Burke and his associates.* May their joint efforts be ineffectual! or rather, may they tend to unite the wise, the moderate, and the good, in both countries, in their efforts to terminate the present sanguinary contest, ere yet the door of reconciliation be forever closed, or those final measures be adopted, which admit not of explanation or debate!

To prevent this desirable object, an object equally necessary to, and equally sought for by both countries, is the sole and avowed purpose of Mr. Burke's letters. An unauthorized individual, and confessedly against the wishes both of the government and the people, he has audaciously attempted to interpose an insuperable barrier to all reconciliation. With a rude and unhallowed voice, he has broken in upon those deliberations, on the result of which depends the destiny of his country, and perhaps of Europe. Hopeless of inculcating upon others his sangui-

* "Every one reasons in his own way relative to the object of this great negotiation. The Jacobins, who regard a Peace with the same eye that a criminal looks on the preparation for his execution, are quite enraged. They wish to

nary and outrageous purpose, he comes forwards himself to carry it into execution. Well apprized, that a nation can feel only through the individuals that compose it, he incessantly labours on the one hand to exasperate the French government, and the French nation, by every indignity that language can convey, and on the other, to instigate his countrymen to eternal hatred, and eternal war. The very title of his book, and the appellation of the "Regicide Directory," incessantly applied to the executive government of France, are a sufficient indication of his malicious purpose. But in order to secure his end by a personal insult, he has directed the full current of his fury against *Carnot*, the very member of the directory with whom it was supposed the intended negotiation would take place. * Not forgetting, that the resentment of powerful nations has been excited by indignities committed by individual subjects on each other, he

"give to the English embassy a second representation of the 'Camp of Grenelle.'" *From Perlet's Journal, a French paper.*

* His anger will now be redoubled; The sanguinary Tyrant *Carnot*, is the advocate of Peace with this country; and it is said to be in consequence of his recommendations, that the directory have rejected the system of *La Croix*, the minister for foreign affairs, which tended to overhurry and defeat the negotiation. *Perlet.*

takes upon himself, as far as his powers will permit, the responsibility of the fate of millions, and involves in the consequences of his caprice, even those who detest his ferocity.

It is wonderfully, and no doubt, wisely directed by the author of nature, that from the same soil and climate from which some plants draw their healthful and nutritive juices, others collect a poison the most destructive to the human race. It would seem too as if the human character displayed a similar diversity, and that some were intended by a natural rectitude and benevolence of disposition to select from surrounding circumstances, causes of peace, charity, and good will, whilst others can deduce from the same circumstances, only the motives of hatred, envy, jealousy, and destruction. Wherever the latter disposition appears, there is no proceeding so open and generous, no transaction so honest, no purpose so virtuous, as not to afford food for its malignity. With whatever it comes in contact, it appropriates it by a kind of chemical affinity, to its own nature; and if it does not find, creates in every thing around it, gall and bitterness. I shall not press on my reader the application of these remarks; but I confess, it has always appeared to me extraordinary, that the same man who persevered during a long course of years, in instigating the people

of America to resistance against this country, and by measures which in these days would infallibly have brought him to the bar of a criminal court, encouraged them to the defence of their independence, should, when a similar circumstance occurred in France, and when there was every reason to presume this great and desirable event might be accomplished *without* contention and *without* bloodshed, have excited a general outcry against the attempt. That the case of America and France are exactly similar, will not indeed be pretended; but the difference between them was such, as upon all reasonable grounds, should have redoubled the energies of his mind in favour of the latter. If the actuating principle of Mr. Burke, had been a generous and disinterested love of liberty, it is not possible that he should have beheld the rising efforts of the people of France, with the obliquity of jealousy, or the frown of hostility; nay, it is not possible that he should not have felt that prepossession in their favour, that solicitude for their success, which in the early part of the revolution, agitated the bosoms of those who had been his associates in the cause of freedom. But, when the moment of decision arrived,

" 'Twas then, O shame! O trust how ill repaid!"

He with a perversity without precedent in the annals of apostacy, seized the operative moment to pour his drug into the healthful mass, and it

curdled into poison. From that instant, his exertions to prolong, and by all possible methods to increase the calamities of the war which he had excited, have been unremitting and successful, and lest some more fortunate combination of circumstances, some returning gleam of human commiseration for human sufferings, should lead the contending parties to listen to the voice of reconciliation, he sedulously collects the ingredients of discord from every passing transaction, and hoards up the phial of his vengeance, 'till the moment when it is most likely to produce its effect. Ardent and impassioned in the cause of Freedom in America, whilst the assertion of that freedom led to contention and to blood; equally impassioned against the liberties of France, and prolonging by every means in his power, the duration of the war, his character acquires a degree of consistency which his opponents have unjustly refused to his pretensions.—*Tros Tyriusve*, it is not *the cause*, that interests him—Alternately the advocate of liberty or despotism, just as his support or his opposition may serve to keep alive the flames of discord, he acts up to the constitution of his nature, and in the economy of the moral world, performs an unwelcome, but perhaps a necessary part.—

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
RELATIVE SITUATION
OF
GREAT BRITAIN
AND
FRANCE.

NOVEMBER THE 16TH, 1902.



OBSERVATIONS, &c.

THE present situation of this country exhibits a singular spectacle. After supporting for nearly ten years, a war of unexampled expense, slaughter, and devastation, the necessities and clamours of the people, combining with the remaining good sense of the nation, effected a peace. The preliminaries were agreed on. The ratification in due time followed; and all descriptions of men united in the general satisfaction, excepting an implacable party, who having carried on the war till the appearance of things became desperate, deserted their posts, and left the whole difficulties of a peace, now become necessary, to the present administration.

What then is the occasion of the present commotion, which agitates the kingdom, and seems to indicate a general apprehension of war? Have any new hostilities taken place between this country and France? Has the Chief Consul refused to comply with the terms of the treaty of Amiens? Are any remonstrances known to have passed between the ministers of the two nations? Has the Legislature of this country had an op-

portunity of expressing an opinion on this momentous question? No—This mighty storm has been raised by a few obscure individuals, who, forgetting their proper province of supplying the world with useful information, have modestly assumed to themselves, since the dissolution of parliament, the character of leaders and dictators of the public opinion. These men have had the temerity to declare, that a new war is indispensable—that we ought not to comply with the treaty of Amiens—*that we must cut the gordian knot*. Accustomed to the daily perusal of these prints, the nation has for a moment been led to believe, that there could not exist such vehemence without some cause. A war is spoken of as not unlikely. The public funds have felt a depression; and the people now look up to the meeting of parliament for the unravelling of the mystery.

May we be allowed to ask these self-elected guides of the public opinion, and particularly such of them as have, during the late contest, espoused the cause of the French, what can be the motives of their present conduct? Are they disinterested and patriotic, or are they mercenary and corrupt? We will, for the sake of argument, assume the former supposition; and endeavour, in a few words, to ascertain what substantial

grounds exist for the daily incentives to slaughter that issue from the press.

Are we to believe, then, that the despotic authority said to be exercised by the first Consul over the people of France, has roused the independent feelings of those who cannot bear to see a great people reduced to slavery? In truth, the French have been particularly unfortunate in conciliating the good opinion of the inhabitants of this country. Before the revolution, we considered them as the abject slaves of a despotic prince, and treated them on all occasions accordingly. When, by an astonishing effort, they threw off the yoke and established a limited monarchy, the general aversion to them increased; as some of our fellow subjects, who expressed an untimely exultation on that occasion, can sufficiently testify. To the monarchy succeeded a republic, which was still more hateful to us; and this was followed by a period of anarchy, of carnage, and of blood, unexampled in the records of mankind, and which for a moment gratified the sanguinary ferocity of those who had predicted, and occasioned it. The various modifications of government which ensued, all equally failed of obtaining our approbation. At length Bonaparte acquired a decided superiority, and extinguished the remaining sparks of opposi-

tion. Yet, even now, when the French may be considered as reduced to their pristine state of obedience, we still continue our hostility. Have we then exchanged characters with the French? And shall we avow the principle asserted by them in the heat of the revolution, and which gave such just and extensive offence—that of becoming Champions of Europe, and assisting every nation that chuses to assert its liberties? Or would it not, after the experience we have had, be more consistent with prudence and common sense, to allow the people of France to settle their own affairs with their first Consul, and adopt such form of government as may be agreeable to themselves? Let us leave them to their fate; and whilst we lament their misfortunes, let our philanthropy console itself in the reflection, that it cannot be expected, that ten millions of men, should attempt to make forty millions happy against their will.

But it will perhaps be said, that this is not the real cause of the present outcry against the first Consul. It is not the absolute authority which he has acquired over the French, but his ambitious projects against the rest of Europe, that loudly call for our interference. Let us examine this question. Let us see whether the first Consul has in fact extended his authority since the

ratification of the articles of peace; and, if so, whether it be our peculiar province to restrain it.

It is not to be denied, that at the time when the preliminaries of peace were agreed on, the power and influence which the first Consul exercised in Italy, were well known, and tacitly conceded. The assumption of the office of president of the Italian Republic, in the interval between the preliminaries and the ratification of peace, could therefore form no substantial obstacle to the conclusion of the treaty. Holland also remains in the same state as at the conclusion of the peace ; acting under the influence, and subject to the controul of the first Consul. These motives of dissatisfaction existed at the time of the treaty with France. If, therefore, we ought on this account to renew hostilities, we ought not to have concluded peace.

But we are told, that the first Consul has crushed the liberties of Switzerland, and is now reducing that unhappy country to the situation of a province of France, or rather, to that of an advanced post, whence he may annoy the rest of Europe.

This observation may be regarded in two points

of view. First—How far it is incumbent on us, in our character of general assertors of the liberties of the world, to take an active part in behalf of the Swiss. Secondly—How far the measure is incumbent on us, in point of prudence and common sense,

A few years since, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, united together to dismember a kingdom, happy under a beloved sovereign, whose authority and government those very powers had pledged themselves to maintain. What part did the magnanimous spirit of this country take in that transaction? It vented a few empty declamations, and left Poland to its fate. Last year the French general Le Clerc, sailed to St. Domingo, and by force of arms reduced the colonies, which had been declared free by the decrees of the French legislature, to their former state of cruel oppression, unrelenting slavery, and the daily discipline of the cart whip. Yet this nation could bear this oppression of their suffering fellow creatures, not only without resentment, but without commiseration; or rather they received the intelligence with satisfaction and delight. What then is this sudden emotion that interests us for the fate of Switzerland? That induces us so pathetically to lament the change that is likely to take place in its govern-

ment? What know we externally of Switzerland, except that it has for ages been a country that has systematically hired out its inhabitants, for the purpose of bloodshed? Or internally, but that it has been divided into several governments, many of which were as despotic as any in Europe? Are not the inhabitants themselves at variance as to the form of their government? And is it not this dissension which has afforded the first Consul a pretence of interference. After the iniquities to which we have already closed our eyes, to start at the misfortunes of Switzerland, savours too much of hypocrisy. But the veil is too thin; and it is to be feared that the cause of Switzerland, is only introduced as the pretext, whilst the substantial ground of offence yet remains to be disclosed.

A true modern politician, whilst he smiles with contempt at the idea that either humanity or justice has any thing to do with the concerns of nations, will however assure us with great seriousness, that we ought not to suffer the encroachments of the first Consul in Switzerland, because they will destroy the balance of power in Europe. Before however we plunge into a war to preserve this balance of power, let us ask ourselves a few questions. Is this country more interested in preserving the balance of power than

the nations of the Continent? If Russia, Austria, Spain, and Prussia, can permit such aggrandizement, is it the peculiar province of this country to interrupt its tranquillity, and risk its dearest interests, to assist those who are either unable or unwilling to assist themselves? Is it incumbent upon us to enforce the performance of a treaty to which we refused to become parties, and which the parties themselves do not think it necessary to support? Are we not happily separated from the rest of Europe by the ocean that surrounds us, and which places us rather as spectators than as actors in the concerns of the Continent? And is it not our true policy rather to secure ourselves, by maintaining a formidable posture of defence both at home and abroad, and to enjoy the advantages of our insular situation, by the extension of our commerce and manufactures, now rapidly reviving, than by plunging into a war, to renew the calamities of the last seven years? In a war of defence, we are able, not only to repel, but to punish the aggressor, whilst by expending our strength in continental warfare, we expose ourselves to the rapacity of the vultures that surround us. The balance of power! who can hitherto determine on which side the beam inclines? Are we not told by these very journalists who raise a cry against the influence of the first Consul, "That the Cabinets of Europe

“await their fate from the decision of the court
 “of Russia?” from Russia! that invulnerable
 power, which can send forth her barbarian my-
 riads, to the annoyance or subjugation of the
 world; secure in her immense wilds from every
 hostile attempt! Is there hitherto any barrier
 in Europe against the growing strength of this
 infant Hercules? and is it our business to tear
 down the only power, that in case of necessity,
 can oppose it with a prospect of success? In
 every point of view, whether political or com-
 mercial, Russia is also a formidable rival of this
 country. But shall we on that account think it
 necessary to proclaim a crusade against her, un-
 der the pretext that she must be reduced to her
 proper standard of equality. That common sense
 which directs the conduct of mankind in the daily
 concerns of life, seems to be discarded, when we
 deliberate on the public relations of states and
 great bodies of people. Before a pugilist com-
 mits himself to the event of a battle, he naturally
 measures the strength of his antagonist, and ex-
 amines with a critical eye the breadth of his shoul-
 ders, and the muscles of his arm; but we are
 called upon to engage in an offensive war, singly,
 with an adversary who has baffled our efforts in
 combination with almost all the powers of Eu-
 rope, in the hope of accomplishing, unassisted
 and unsupported, that, which in conjunction

with such mighty allies we have attempted in vain. Have we forgotten in how many ways we are vulnerable, and that whilst we are weakening our enemy, we are destroying ourselves?

From these observations we may perhaps be allowed to infer, that no motives, either of humanity, policy, or common sense, can possibly induce this country to plunge itself again into the horrors of war—of war! that scourge of human nature! that creator of widows and orphans! that devourer of the subsistence of the poor! that fruitful source of desolation and blood abroad, and of tears, of misery, and of famine at home! Of war! that national and individual evil; that enemy to social intercourse; which bears upon its brow the curse of God, and raises mankind to a dreadful pre-eminence over the rest of creation, by superior ferocity, brutality, and guilt!

Yet, although the present rage of our daily oracles for the renewal of hostilities with France cannot be justified by either patriotic or political motives, the war-whoop increases in violence, and the public papers, whether under the denomination of ministerial or opposition, emulate each other in virulence and abuse, against a nation with whom we are professedly at peace.

Hitherto disappointed in our inquiries, we must resort to other motives for the explanation of such conduct. Let us then for a moment trace back the steps by which we have arrived at the precipice on which we now stand; and endeavour to discover how we have been impelled into this region of storms and of tumult, without being conscious of the progress we had made.

It is well known, that on the conclusion of the peace, a disappointed and sanguinary party retired, or rather were dismissed, from the councils of the sovereign. Although weak, both in number and in talents, this party makes up in industry and in vehemence, what it wants in other respects. Zealous disciples of their great apostle, the political fanatic Edmund Burke, they are indefatigable in spreading war and desolation over the face of the earth. Their leading maxim is to brutalize the people at home, in order to render them fit for the sanguinary purposes which they keep unceasingly in view. Their devotion to their blood-stained deity is sincere and ardent. Slaughter and desolation are their sole delight. Like the vulture, they scent carnage at a distance, and feast on the putrid carcases that contaminate the field of death. Such are the men towards whom we are to look for an explanation of our present situation. Let us un-

ravel the thread of their devices. Let us strip the mask from their features. Let us disclose to the nation the extent of their views ; and, whatever may be the event, let us combat these enemies of their species in open day.

No sooner had the celebration of peace spread joy throughout the two nations, than the self-elected dictators of the day, availing themselves of the freedom of the British press, began to animadvert on the internal concerns of France, and the conduct of the first Consul, in a strain little calculated to promote the good understanding of the two countries. This species of attack naturally gave rise to recriminations, and these afforded our patriotic and irritable countrymen, a pretext for the most unlimited abuse. The first Consul was a tyrant and a despot, and the people of France were called upon, in no ambiguous terms, to free themselves from their oppressor, either by secret treachery or open violence.

Whatever may be the nature of a government, incitements to revolt and to assassination cannot be allowed to be circulated within its territories, for this would be to commit a political *felo de se*. The importation of British newspapers was of course prohibited in France. From this period the editors set no bounds to their invectives and

their abuse. They affected to consider the prohibition as a triumph ; as a mark of the superiority of their arguments, and as a proof of the high privileges of the British press.

Disappointed in their hopes of exciting internal commotions in France, they raised the cry of war ; and have endeavoured, by every argument which resentment could fabricate, to urge this country to an hostile attack. If we may believe these crusaders, there is not a man to be met with, who will now dare to avow a different opinion. Although with a hesitation which marks their folly, whilst it betrays their fears, they candidly own, there may be some doubt as to the *expediency* of a war at the present moment.

We have spoken of the freedom of the British press. What is this freedom ? Is it the liberty of assuming the organ of the public voice, to abuse and vilify in the grossest terms, any government in Europe, which may not have the good fortune to be honoured with the approbation of these enlightened judges ? Whilst laws and manners regulate the intercourse of private life, are states and nations to be aspersed without decency, and without reserve ? The liberty of speech is an invaluable privilege, as well as the liberty of the press ; but if the liberty of speech be used to

raise dissensions between neighbours, there are regulations by which it may be restrained; and shall no regulations subsist to curb that outrageous spirit of insult, which arms nation against nation, and may desolate the world with blood?

Let any Englishman ask himself, what would be his feelings, were the French, or any other people, to dictate to us the forms of our government, or endeavour, by convincing us that we were slaves, to incite us to insurrection and to tumult? Not that observations on other governments are to be restricted, if made with that enlightened spirit of candour and good will, which evinces an interest in the happiness of the people, who may be the object of such remarks, and if calculated to derive from the consideration of different forms of government, maxims of importance for the benefit of the world at large; but who will say that this has been the case with the editors of the British papers? Or who can deny, that their objects have been to desolate a country, with whom we are professedly at peace, by raising a civil war within it, and attacking it by open arms without.

Let us then acknowledge, that this outrage on public decorum, is not to be attributed to the liberty, but the licentiousness of the press. The

nature of which is as different, as light and darkness. The liberty of the press ! that palladium of our rights, that boast of Englishmen, that friend of virtue, that corrector of vice, sees in the licentiousness of the press, its worst and most dangerous enemy. Experience indeed has shewn, that it is the destiny of all liberty, to perish by being carried to extremes, and the true enemies of the liberty of the press, are those who abuse it to the purposes of party, of personal feelings, or of national resentment. It has been said, that united remonstrances have been made by different powers of Europe, against the license in which our printers have indulged themselves. Every Englishman will agree that the united powers of Europe, ought not to be allowed to alter an iota of the British laws, or the British constitution. But it may be well to consider, whether such laws, as they now exist, may not repress the flippant insolence of those who sport with the dearest interests of a nation, and endeavour, with all their zeal, to involve the country in a war. Against proceedings of this nature, courts of law have not shut their doors; and if these incendiaries persevere in their offence, the character of the nation loudly requires that they should feel the effects of their temerity.

Such however have been, and such yet appear to be, the ready instruments of that party, which yet dares to look forward towards the direction of the affairs of this country. The long suspension of parliament has been favourable to their views. Through the mercenary medium of the public prints, they have breathed contagion through the land. With unwearied perseverance they have arrogantly insinuated, that the present ministers are unequal to the task which they have undertaken, and have endeavoured to raise a storm, in order to terrify the Pilot from the helm. But the good sense of the people, has already begun to recover itself from its surprise; and the nation is aware of the bold and insidious attack, made upon its character and its repose. The remembrance of the distresses to which the country was reduced by the conduct of the late administration, will be a sufficient pledge against their again obtaining their dangerous ascendancy. The will of the Sovereign, and the voice of the people are happily united, and the judicious and conciliating measures of the present minister, have given the nation an assurance, that such a system is likely to be adopted, as will tend to the true welfare of the country, to the encouragement of manufactures, of commerce, and of agriculture, and ultimately restore us to that state of prosperity, of which we have

been a while deprived, by the effects of the late expensive and destructive war.

If however in the course of events, we should be called upon once more to take an active part in an hostile struggle, let us before we engage in it, seriously consider both the alleged cause, and the probable event; and let us meet it with our strength unbroken, and our honour untainted; but insulated as we are, let us not be the first to plunge into a contest in which we have little to gain, and much to lose. Let the governments of the Continent take the lead, at least, in adjusting the due counterpoise which is to support the tranquillity of Europe; and if dissensions should arise, and we are called upon to interfere, let it be in the dignified character of an arbitrator, rather than in that of an auxiliary and an ally.

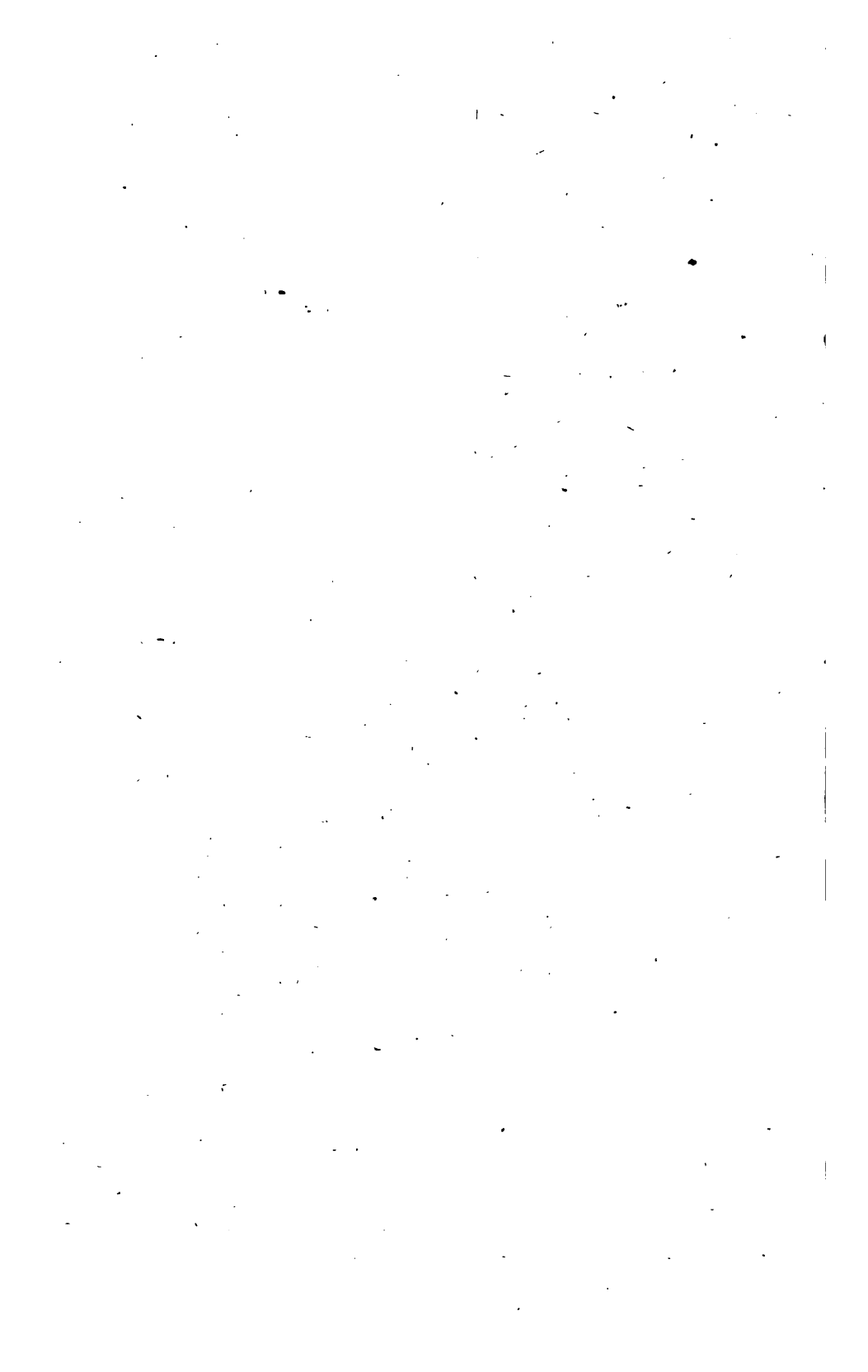
Such is the policy which ought to have directed this country on a former occasion. By this conduct we should have been regarded as the pacificators of Europe, and should have poured through Britain the commerce and the riches of the world. Such is the high destination of this country; and they who would sacrifice it, either to a *war of words*, or to the *views of a faction*, cannot be the friends either of that country, or of mankind.



CONSIDERATIONS
ON
THE CAUSES
OBJECTS AND CONSEQUENCES
OF THE PRESENT WAR,
AND ON
THE EXPEDIENCY, OR THE DANGER
OF
PEACE WITH FRANCE.

By WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reader must not expect to find the following pages filled with recriminations against the French people and their ruler. I leave it to the consistency of those who have been uniformly hostile to the cause of rational liberty, and the constitutional rights of the subject in this country, to abuse the despotism of France.

It is to my countrymen, and not to our adversaries, that I wish to address myself; to call upon them by every motive that can actuate good men and good subjects, to attend, at this momentous crisis, to their own real interests, to dissipate those exaggerated apprehensions which seem likely to plunge us into the very evils which they dread; to awaken the people to a just sense of the importance of the great cause of political morality; to remind them that the faults of the government are the faults of the people; the honour of the nation their honour, and the disgrace of the nation their disgrace; and to induce them to feel, that the conscience of a nation is in the bosom of every honest man.

*Allerton,
8th Jan. 1808.*



CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

SINCE the unsuccessful issue of the negotiations for peace with France in the year 1806, a series of events, equally unexpected and important, has awakened this country to a more lively sense of its situation, and brought on a new crisis of public opinion. The experience of another year of warfare has been added to those which preceded it, and has shewn not only the futility of all attempts on our part to overturn or diminish the power of France, but the high probability that all such attempts will still continue to produce effects directly the reverse of those intended. In fact, it is only since the rupture of that negotiation, that the operation of the war is become more directly injurious to the commercial interests of this country. Until that period, an intercourse subsisted between Great Britain and the Continent, sufficient to carry off our manufactures, and to give employment to our traders; but the unhappy contests between France and the northern powers, and above all our late attack upon Denmark, have afforded our enemies an opportunity of exclud-

ing us from every port in Europe, and have placed the key of the continent in the hands of Bonaparte. These circumstances, added to the threatening aspect of public affairs, have at length excited the dormant feelings of the people; and a suspicion, not wholly groundless, begins to prevail, that if they sleep much longer they may awake only to their destruction. Subjects of the greatest importance to their interests begin to be again discussed. Hitherto, indeed, we have contended with our enemies for prizes of great value. States and empires have been the objects of dispute; and, as far as we have been interested in them, have been lost. But we have as yet struggled only for the possessions of our allies. At the present moment we are called upon for a higher stake. *If the war is to be continued*, it is now no longer matter of exaggeration to assert, that the sovereign of these realms is to contend for his crown; the people for their liberties and rights; for the soil in which their forefathers lie intomb'd. Against this stake, what is the prize we can hope to obtain from the enemy? *The bare honour of having defended ourselves with success*; for in any hopes of our being able to make an impression on the dominions of France, the wildest advocates of the war will now scarcely indulge themselves. Thus we follow up a losing game. Holland, Switzerland,

Germany, Sardinia, Italy, Prussia, Turkey, Denmark, and Russia, are not only lost to us, as allies, but have thrown their weight into the opposite scale. With the assistance of these powers we have been completely disappointed in all our views. Is it then advisable that we should play the last desperate game, and exhibit ourselves to the world as the last object of contest, with an adversary against whom we have been so far from obtaining any substantial advantages, that the utmost efforts we have been able to make, have hitherto only served to open to him an opportunity for still greater success?

To whatever causes we may attribute the origin, or however we may be inclined to account for the continuance of the late war, certain it is, that all the motives which have successively been alleged in its justification, have, as applied to the present, long since ceased to operate. Was it entered into *for the preservation of the established order of Europe*? In this respect it defeated its own purpose, and brought on the complete overthrow of that which it pretended to support. Was it intended to *repress those persons in this country, who in the early part of the French revolution disinterestedly rejoiced in the prospect of amelioration in France, and thereby afforded a pretext for the gloomy advocates of tyranny to brand them*

with disaffection? That object has been sufficiently accomplished by the calamities which the British councils have brought upon France; calamities which have compelled the friends of liberty to change their sounds of exultation into those of mourning, and have extinguished the torch of freedom to its last spark.* Was it the object of the war to *restore the family of Bourbon?* That project, at all times too absurd to be openly avowed, and only considered as the underplot of the drama,† would now be thought too extravagant to impose upon the hopes of the most credulous. As the primary motives of the war expired, new ones however arose; and we next carried on the contest because *the government with which we had to treat, was unable to maintain the accustomed relations of peace and amity*; as if the same government which could call forth the

* "The great object of the war was to prevent the introduction of the *pernicious principles that were then prevalent in France*. These principles being now materially changed, the necessity of continuing the contest no longer became evident." *Lord Hawkesbury's Speech, 29th Nov. 1801.*

+ "Mr. Pitt had no difficulty in saying, that although he never considered the restoration of monarchy in France as a *sine quâ non*, he thought it would have been a *happy thing for France and for Europe*; and he thought so still. Happy would he have been to have put together the fragments of a venerable edifice so cruelly scattered." *Mr. Pitt's Speech, ibid.*

energies of a nation to successful warfare, had not sufficient authority to grant it repose. But whether this objection were well founded or not at the time it was made, certain it is, that as a present reason for the continuance of hostilities it is effectually removed; and that, thanks to ourselves, the government with which we have now to contend, is at least *as able* to maintain the relations of peace and amity as any in Europe. The pretext was indeed too absurd to be of long continuance, and was therefore shortly succeeded by a determination to carry on the war *till we had obtained indemnity for the past, and security for the future*. Indemnity for the past! It is not in the power of our enemies to give it. What can indemnify this country for the millions it has expended, and the blood it has shed? Security for the future is indeed at all times to be kept in view; but whether this is more likely to be attained by our persevering in the war, or by negotiating for peace, it is the object of the following pages to shew. But whatever might be the validity of all or any of these motives, they were not judged of sufficient importance to prevent those discussions with our enemy which terminated in the treaty of Amiens. In that treaty, therefore, these causes of animosity lie buried. The very grounds upon which they

were founded had, indeed, long been removed; and if we were compelled to state to the world the reasons upon which we continue our present hostilities, they must be sought for in events subsequent to the formation of that treaty.

That the people of this country were ardent in their desire for peace, and sincere in their wishes to maintain it, sufficiently appeared from the general sentiment in favour of it before it was concluded, and in the undissembled joy which that event diffused through the kingdom at large. It must not however be supposed that this exultation arose from our having obtained those objects for which we had so long contended. On the contrary, after an immense addition to our national debt, and the loss of an incalculable number of the lives of our fellow-subjects, we were satisfied to leave the established order of things in Europe in a much worse condition than that in which we found it, and to console ourselves with the acquisition of Ceylon and Trinidad; whilst France added extensive territories, containing nearly five millions of subjects, to her dominions. But the fact was, that peace had become necessary to the country; and the people, harassed in person and distressed in property, sanctioned by their decided approbation the

temperate conduct and wise measures of the minister.

That reconciliation, which was a just cause of satisfaction to the true friends of their country, was however regarded by those who could sacrifice its best interests to their own exasperated feelings and mercenary views, with dissatisfaction and abhorrence. Among these were some of the adherents to the late order of things in France, who after having found an hospitable shelter in this island, employed themselves in exciting the public indignation against the French people and government. In this their object was manifest. As they had no share either in the dangers or the expense of the contest, its termination was to them no cause of rejoicing; but, what was more to the purpose, the establishment of peace defeated those hopes of a restoration of that favourite system of feudal vassalage, and that prospect of retaliation, which, during the continuance of the war they had never ceased to indulge. Another, and a still more formidable party, consisted of the innumerable bands of journalists and hireling writers, who feed upon the credulity and fatten upon the calamities of a nation; men who flourish most in the midst of tumult; to whom the disasters of the country are as valuable as her triumphs, a destructive battle as a rich harvest,

and a new war as a freehold estate. Nor was the number small of those who having been accustomed to derive their emoluments from the continuance of the war through the endless ramifications of *office, place, and pension*, or by the more lucrative means of *contracts with government*, were thoroughly dissatisfied with the pacification, and looked anxiously forwards towards fresh causes of disagreement. The united efforts of these irreconcilable enemies to the general tranquillity were not without effect. Their reiterated clamours appeared like the public voice. Scarcely were the preliminaries of the treaty concluded, than new grounds of hostility were discovered; every provocation that could excite the dormant passions was incessantly called forth; and the same ministers who had concluded the peace, were loudly required to break a treaty which they could not disavow, and to cut the *gordian knot*. Instead of endeavouring to heal the wounds of war, by a conciliatory conduct towards the French people and government, the English press continued to pour forth against them the most unrestrained abuse; and by these means the combustibles were prepared for a new explosion.

That the disagreement between the two countries, which soon afterwards led to fresh hostili-

ties, had no foundation in any unavoidable or substantial cause, may sufficiently appear from attending to the manner in which the discussion commenced and was conducted by the opposing parties. Some impediments had indeed arisen, as to the evacuation of Egypt and Malta by the English troops, and the evacuation of Holland by the French, but these difficulties appeared to be capable of explanation, and were in a course of being effectually removed, when a representation on the part of the French government, by their envoy, M. Otto, called the attention of ministers to a serious complaint. The subject of this representation was not any fresh obstacle to the execution of the treaty of Amiens, or any new aggression on the part of the Government of this country against France, but was confined to *the improper conduct of the French emigrants in this country; the abusive publications against the Government of France, which daily issued from the press, and particularly to a passage contained in one of the numbers of Peltier's Journal.**

In reply, Lord Hawkesbury informed M. Otto, that it "*was impossible that his Majesty's Government could peruse the article complained of, without the greatest displeasure,*" and assured

* Letter of M. Otto, July 25th, 1802.

him that it should be referred to his Majesty's Attorney-General.* Nor does it appear, that at this period any recrimination was made by the British Ministry, on account of publications of a similar tendency in France. Under these circumstances the subject rested from the 28th of July to the 17th of August, when the French minister, in a formal memorial, entered more fully into the subject, contending, "that it was
 " not a question respecting some paragraphs inadvertently inserted in a public print, but was
 " a question of a deep and continued system of
 " defamation, directed, not only against the chief
 " of the French Republic, but against *all the constituted authorities and the whole nation*, represented by these libellers in the most odious and
 " degrading terms; and that it had even been
 " remarked, *that many of these prints contained an appeal to the French people against the Government and fundamental Laws of their country.*" He further represented, that, "by the first article
 " of the treaty of Amiens, the two powers had
 " agreed to afford no protection, either directly
 " or indirectly, to those who should cause pre-

* M. Peltier, the author of the article, was accordingly prosecuted, and convicted of a libel; but the war taking place, was never brought up for judgment.

“ judice to any of them ;” and reminded the
 British Ministry, “ that whatever might be the
 “ protection which the English laws afforded to
 “ native writers, the Ministry were enabled, by
 “ the Alien Act, to *compel foreigners, whose resi-*
 “ *dence was prejudicial to the interests of Great*
 “ *Britain, to quit the kingdom.*” * The answer of
 Lord Hawkesbury admitted, “ that very improper
 “ paragraphs had appeared in some of the En-
 “ glish newspapers, against the Government of
 “ France ; and that it could not be denied like-
 “ wise, that publications of a still more improper
 “ and indecent nature had made their appear-
 “ ance in this country ;” but he now contended,
 that, “ as the French Government had thought
 “ fit to resort to recrimination, or, at least, to
 “ authorise it in others, they could have no right
 “ to complain if their subsequent appeal to his
 “ Majesty had failed of effect.” To the remark
 of M. Otto, respecting the dismissal of foreign-
 ers from the kingdom, Lord Hawkesbury replied,
 “ that the provisions of the act referred to, were
 “ made for the purpose of preventing the resi-
 “ dence of foreigners, whose numbers and prin-
 “ ciples had a tendency to disturb the internal
 “ peace of these dominions ; but that it did not

♦ Memorial of M. Otto, Aug. 17, 1802.

" follow that it would be a warrantable applica-
 " tion of such a law, to exert its powers in the
 " cases of the individuals complained of, who
 " were liable to be prosecuted under the law of
 " the land, in like manner as others had been in
 " similar cases, at the instance of foreign govern-
 " ments."* How far these reasonings may be
 logically just, or politically expedient, it is not
 now of importance to inquire; but they de-
 monstrate that the disagreement arose from pub-
 lications in this country, which Ministers them-
 selves admitted to be indecent and improper;
 and that the publications in France were by way
 of recrimination. The discussion was afterwards
 carried on between the French Ministry and the
 British Ambassador in France, but without pro-
 ducing any satisfactory consequences. On the
 contrary, Lord Whitworth informed M. Talley-
 rand in express terms, "*That until the First Con-*
 "*sul could so far master his feelings as to be as in-*
 "*different to the scurrility of the English prints as*
 "*the English government was to that which daily*
 "*appeared in France, the state of irritation was*
 "*irremediable.*"†

* Lord Hawkesbury to M. Otto, Aug. 28, 1802.

† Letter of Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, Jan. 27, 1803.

To this observation Talleyrand appears to have made no reply; but to have proceeded with great solemnity to inquire, "*What were his Majesty's intentions with respect to the evacuation of Malta;*" a subject, which, for upwards of six months, appears to have been entirely at rest. This inquiry his Lordship transmitted to the British Ministry, and the answer of Lord Hawkesbury affords a new proof of the importance attached, as well by the Government of this country as by that of France, to injurious language and false aspersions. After taking a review of the acquisitions made by France since the signing of the preliminary articles of peace; and contending "that his Majesty would have been warranted, consistently with the spirit of the treaty, in claiming equivalents for these acquisitions, *as a counterpoise to the augmentation of the power of France,*" he declares, "that his Majesty was willing to have waved the pretensions he might have a right to advance, of this nature, and have carried the treaty into effect, had not the very extraordinary publication of the report of Col. Sebastiani attracted the attention of his Majesty's Government. That this report contained *the most unjustifiable insinuations and charges against the officer who commanded the British forces in Egypt, and against the British army in that quarter; in-*

" situations and charges wholly destitute of
 " foundation, and such as would warrant his
 " Majesty in demanding that satisfaction, which
 " on occasions of this nature, independent powers
 " in a state of amity have a right to expect from
 " each other. That this, which was the report of
 " an accredited agent, disclosed views in the
 " highest degree injurious to the interests of his
 " Majesty's dominions, and utterly inconsistent
 " with the letter and spirit of the treaty of
 " peace."*

This communication immediately led the way
 to the very extraordinary interview between
 Lord Whitworth and the First Consul, which
 will long be remembered as an unique proceed-
 ing in diplomacy. The French ruler, after la-
 menting, " as a matter of infinite disappointment
 " to him, that the treaty of Amiens, instead of
 " being followed by conciliation and friendship,
 " had been productive only of continual and in-
 " creasing jealousy and mistrust," enumerated
 the several provocations which he had received
 from England. In the first rank he placed " the
 " non-evacuation, by the British Government,
 " of Malta, and Alexandria, as they were bound
 " to do by treaty," and declared, " that no-con-

* Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, Feb. 9th, 1803.

"sideration on earth should make him acquiesce,
 "and that of the two he would rather see the
 "English in possession of the *Fauxbourg S.*
 "*Antoine* than of Malta." He then adverted to
 "the abuse thrown out against him in the
 "English public prints; but this, he said, he
 "did not so much regard, as that which appeared
 "in the French papers published in London.
 "This he considered as much more mischievous,
 "since it was meant to *incite the people of France*
 "*against him and his government.* He acknow-
 "ledged that the irritation he felt against Eng-
 "land increased daily; *because every wind which*
 "*blew from England brought nothing but enmity*
 "*and hatred against him.* France, he observed,
 "had an army of 480,000 men, to be immediately
 "completed, and all ready for the most despe-
 "rate enterprises. England had a fleet that
 "made her mistress of the seas, and which he
 "did not think he should be able to equal in
 "less than ten years. Two such countries, by
 "a proper understanding, might govern the
 "world; but by their strifes might overturn it.
 "He said, that if he had not felt the enmity of
 "the British Government on every occasion
 "since the treaty of Amiens, there would have
 "been nothing that he would not have done to
 "prove his desire to conciliate: *participation in*

" ~~indemnities~~ as well as in influence on the conti-
 " nent; *treaties of commerce*; in short, any thing
 " that could have given satisfaction and testified
 " his friendship. Nothing however had been
 " able to conquer the hatred of the British
 " Government; and therefore it was now come
 " to the point, whether we were to have peace or
 " war. To preserve peace, *the treaty of Amiens*
 " *must be fulfilled*; the abuse in the public prints,
 " if not totally suppressed, at least kept within
 " bounds, and confined to the English papers;
 " and the protection so openly given to his
 " bitterest enemies (Georges and others) must be
 " withdrawn. If war; it was necessary only to
 " say so, and to refuse to fulfil the treaty." To
 " these and many other observations of the First
 " Consul, Lord Whitworth very justly replied,
 " that, "after a war of such long duration, so full
 " of rancour, and carried on in a manner of
 " which history had no example, it was but na-
 " tural that a considerable degree of agitation
 " should still prevail; but that this, like the swell
 " after a storm, would gradually subside, if not
 " kept up by the policy of either party. That
 " he would not pretend to pronounce which
 " had been the aggressor in the paper war, and
 " which was still kept up, though with this
 " difference, that in England it was independent

" of the Government, and in France its very act
" and dead."*

From this interview it sufficiently appears, that whatever might be the subject of discussion, one principle cause of difference and of exasperation was the abusive publications on each side the water, upon the priority of which Lord Whitworth did not think it expedient to pronounce. It certainly also appears, that the previous admonition of the British Ambassador to the First Consul, had not been without effect; as he freely consents to submit to a reasonable portion of abuse, provided it was in English. But it is of much more importance to observe the idea which the French ruler professed to entertain of the relative position and the different interests of France and of this country; an idea which seems, either inadvertently or intentionally, to have been passed over without the slightest notice; but which, if it had been attended to and improved upon, might not only have given peace to Europe, but have placed Great Britain beyond the reach of danger from any power on earth. If *peace* had been the object of the British Ministry, here was the ground work of it; if

* Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, Feb. 21, 1803.

security, here was the season for finding it ; if *aggrandizement*, this was the opportunity for obtaining it. In an arrangement upon these grounds, this country would have made no sacrifices. To have increased her maritime resources, extended her commerce, preserved the general tranquillity, and even retained on the continent that influence which her honour and dignity required, might have been the result of a temperate discussion of the points referred to by the First Consul. But what was the answer of the British Ministry? A total silence on these most important and interesting topics ; and instead of a reply to them, a new reference to all the existing causes of dissatisfaction, *the complaints of the French Government respecting the licentiousness of the English press ; the Report of Sebastiani ; the resolution of his Majesty not to evacuate Malta without some new arrangement ; and fresh complaints respecting the conduct of the French Government towards Turkey.** In the mean time an expression in an *Exposé* of the state of the French nation, laid before the legislative body, in which the reporter insultingly asserted, that *England alone could not contend with France*, inflamed the resentment of the British nation to the highest pitch ; and the

* Lord Hawkesbury to Lord Whitworth, Feb. 18th, 1803.

man who would have dared to have treated the expression with the contempt it deserved, would have been deemed a traitor to his country.

In that indignant feeling which repels with just defiance, the arrogance of self-assumed superiority, I hope I shall always participate with my country. But when we complain of a national affront, it is incumbent on us to examine whether our own conduct may not have given rise to it. If for this purpose we recal the tenor of the publications which then disgraced the British press, we shall find sufficient cause to suspect, that whatever may have been the insolence of the French, we have been at least their equals, either in the ascending degrees of arrogance and presumption, or the degrading scale of low and vulgar abuse. Under these circumstances, it might have been expected that we should have borne with patience an expression, evidently intended, from the time it was pronounced, to influence the negotiation.* To this reasoning it may be objected, that this hostile sentiment had the sanction of the French Government, whilst the abuse poured out on this side the water, was only the production of unauthorized individuals; but this,

* 21st Feb. 1803.

although it may be held to be a good distinction here, will probably not be considered so by the rest of Europe. To foreign states, that which a country does, or that which it permits to be done by its subjects, is the same. With our internal regulations they can have no concern; but they have a right to expect from us that respect for their institutions, which we claim for our own. To encroach upon the freedom of the press, will never be the act of any real friend to the interests of mankind; but to restrain its licentiousness is not to encroach upon, but to preserve that freedom. If it be in the power of every venal demagogue, or wild enthusiast, to throw out, unrestrained, the most unjust and offensive aspersions against the rulers and governments of other states, a cause of hostility will never be far to seek. In fact, nations, as they are composed of, so they feel like individuals, and the general sentiment differs from the particular one, only in being more permanent and more intense.

On the commencement of the war, it soon appeared that the two countries differed so essentially both in national policy and physical situation, that they were scarcely tangible to each other at any one point. The armies of France, collected on the shores of the ocean, and the volunteers of Great Britain, continued to breathe

defiance against each other; but this did not satisfy the eager expectations of the partisans of the war, who attributed to the inactivity of the Ministry that which was the inevitable result of the posture of affairs, and of the new relations on the continent. Mr. Pitt was therefore again called to the direction of the British cabinet, for the avowed purpose of carrying on the war with greater effect. That this was the signal for new disasters, was foreseen by every one who was not totally insensible to the state of Europe, and to the experience of past events. It was to no purpose that the French Ruler, on assuming the imperial title, in a letter addressed to the British Sovereign, professed himself ready to enter upon a discussion with Great Britain for a pacification. His proposal was rejected on the pretext that *Great Britain must first consult her allies*. In fact, other views now occupied the attention of the Minister, who was at that moment employing his utmost efforts in exciting the continental powers to another attack upon France. For this purpose, the British Envoys at Petersburg and Vienna were indefatigable.* Russia

* "I have in several conversations lately with Prince Czartorisky and Comte Stadion, urged the expediency of *losing no time in beginning war.*" Lord Gran. Levison Gower to Lord Mulgrave. Petersburg 3d Sept. 1808.

entered with eagerness into the project, and Austria, prevailed upon by the representations of the two powers, at length consented to become a party. In order to give greater effect to the measures of the allied powers, the attack upon France was to be, as unexpected as it was formidable. Terms of accommodation were to be held out, to which it was certain France would not accede; and “*the Austrian Sovereign was to heighten or lower his language as he might be prepared with the means of making good his pretensions.*”* The *deception*, however, as it was very properly called by the British Ambassador, could not be carried on beyond the month of August,† It was to no purpose that the Emperor of Austria assured the French Ambassador, “*that his views in arming were only to maintain peace.*”‡—The activity of the British Envoys, and the immense levies of Russian and Austrian troops, would no longer admit of concealment; and the French

* These are not the words of the author, but of the British Ambassador at Vienna. V. *Sir Ar. Paget's Letter to Lord Mulgrave*, 29th Aug. 1805.

† “It was hardly to be expected that *the deception* could be carried on beyond the month of August; and this was in fact “the epocha at which it ceased.” *Sir Ar. Paget's Letter to Lord Mulgrave*, 24th Oct. 1805,

‡ *Sir Ar. Paget to Lord Mulgrave*, 29th Aug. 1805.

Ruler, who during this supposed secrecy was probably aware of every transaction, declared, "that if he was obliged to repel force by force, he would not commit the error of waiting for the Russians to form a junction with the Austrians against him."* Compelled to take the field without the aid of an ally, and distracted by the jealousy and dissensions of their commanders, the Austrians opposed but a very inadequate barrier to the union and rapidity of the French. In the commencement of the conflict, the greater part of the Austrian armies were made prisoners, and the remainder dispersed. Bonaparte, with unexampled celerity, passed through the Electorate of Wirtemberg, and the plains of Nordlingen, whilst General Ney completely cut off the communication between the Austrians and Russians.† As the consolidated armies of France approached towards Vienna, their progress was irresistible. Advancing in detached bodies, the Russian armies attempted in vain to repair the misfortunes of the allies. The decisive battle of Austerlitz terminated the contest, and the successor of the Cæsars, driven from his throne, was compelled to accept of the terms dictated to him by the conqueror.

* Note of M. Talleyrand, 16th Aug. 1805.

† Sir Ar. Paget to Lord Mulgrave, 24th Oct. 1805.

In the affairs of nations, success has too often been allowed to varnish over the most unjustifiable purposes ; but in the present instance, however laudable the object had been, the misconduct and folly of those who had given rise to the alliance, and should have combined the operations of the war, were such, as must, in the eyes of impartial posterity, brand them with indelible disgrace. Not only were the Austrians compelled to sustain alone the whole power of the enemy, but the King of Prussia, with an immense military establishment ready for action, and sufficient at any moment, in case of a serious contest, to turn the fortunes of the war, was suffered to remain neuter ; not even bound by the alliance, much less committed to the cause, as he ought to have been, by some decisive and overt act.* By this primary error, occasioned by a blind confidence that the accession of Russia would insure the co-operation of Prussia,† the Austrians were exposed to the attack of the enemy without support ; the

* See the *Treaties between England, Russia, Austria, and Sweden*, published with observations upon them by Ridgeway, 1806, under the title of *Considerations on the late Treaties*, where the reader will find many acute and judicious remarks on those monuments of human folly.

† Remarks by the Cabinet of Petersburg on the plan of operations proposed by Austria.

second of the Russian armies having been delayed in its march a whole month, by Prussia threatening to oppose it.* In fact, the eagerness of the British Ministry to hasten forwards the attack upon France, whilst the two imperial States were disposed to it, deprived them of the opportunity of ascertaining the intentions of Prussia with that precision which the importance of the crisis required. The interests of Great Britain and her allies were thus committed to the decision of a power, on whom the British Minister had no sufficient grounds of reliance; and as the Prussian Sovereign bestrode the balance, he might, in case the contest had been doubtful, have inclined the beam to either side, as his feelings or his interest directed. The promptitude and rapidity of the French Ruler deprived him, however, of the opportunity of interference; and with the eyes of all Europe upon him, that Sovereign stood an inactive spectator of a contest, the result of which was manifestly calculated to give him a master. This has been sufficiently evinced by subsequent events; nor is it certain, that if the efforts of the allies had been crowned with success, his situation would have been more secure.

With the battle of Austerlitz, the confederation against France terminated, and with that

* Memoir communicated by Count Stahrenberg.

terminated also the political career and the life of Mr. Pitt. A statesman to whom it would be unjust to deny the endowments of extraordinary talents, and the praise of having improved those talents, in some departments, to a most uncommon degree. But these accomplishments, which ought to have rendered him a benefactor to his country, were unfortunately subservient to one predominating passion, which not only counteracted their good effects, but converted them into implements of danger and destruction. This passion he inherited from his father, who cherished it in the early years of his son, and directed his infant gaze towards that eminent station which he had himself once occupied. In his education nothing was left undone that could qualify him to attain this object ; and no one certainly ever entered into public life with equal advantages. There is, however, an essential difference between those qualities which are calculated to obtain power, and those which enable us to make a proper use of it. Unfortunately, the system of education of Mr. Pitt was, in politics, that which Lord Chesterfield's is in private life. It was founded on too narrow a basis, and aimed too directly at its object. A cultivated mind and a humane disposition will render their possessor truly polite ; sound principles and a real love of mankind, truly patriotic ; but without these, nei-

ther the politeness nor the patriotism are any thing more than a whited sepulchre. The system was however successful; the young orator began his career in a manner the best calculated to display his powers. As he spoke the hopes of freedom revived; corruption shrunk before his glance, and the nation hailed him as her deliverer; but no sooner was the prize within his grasp, than he seized it with an eagerness, and retained it with a tenacity, which all the efforts of his opponents could neither impede nor relax. Having thus obtained the supreme power, the talents which had acquired it, were employed with equal success to preserve it. The correction of abuses, the removal of speculation and corruption, the reform of the representation, the extension of religious and civil liberty, were now no longer the objects in view; or were only recalled at stated periods, to shew with what dexterity the minister could blast his promise without breaking his faith. Well schooled in all the routine and arcana of office, an adept in the science of finance and taxation, Mr. Pitt's great accomplishment was a thorough knowledge of the artificial and complex machine of government, and his great defect, a total insensibility to the feelings of mankind, and a thorough ignorance of the leading principles of human nature. Unfortunately for his fame and for his

country, new situations arose, to which the hackneyed rules of a narrow policy were totally inapplicable. A powerful nation, whose slavery had for ages been its reproach, threw off its shackles, and attempted to form for itself a limited monarchy. It was Mr. Pitt's first misfortune to be insensible to the grandeur of so glorious a struggle; his second, to miscalculate its consequences. The first act of France was to hold out her emancipated hands to the free states of England and of America; but the coldness of the Minister soon convinced her that in this government she was not to expect a friend. That coldness soon degenerated into enmity and abhorrence, and through every change of circumstance and situation, through all the evolutions and forms of her government, whether monarchical, republican, aristocratical, or despotic, she found in him a decided and an inflexible enemy. With what success his hostility has been attended, impartial history will shew. Whether the attempt was to march to Paris; to restore the family of Bourbon; to restrain the French within the limits of their own dominions; or, to starve them into subjection; in whatever way our enmity has been demonstrated, it has failed of its effect. To assert, however, that these efforts have failed, is wholly inadequate to the proper statement of the fact. They have not only failed of their object, but

have been the positive and active cause of the continued union and consequent triumph of the French nation. To what circumstance is it to be attributed, that a people so restless in their disposition, so changeful in their views, should have been united together through all the variations of their government, and have acted in all their external relations with one heart, and as one man? To what, but the continued pressure of exterior force? To the successive combinations formed, under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, to compel them to submission? That France has suffered in the contest; that her best blood has flowed upon the scaffold, that the luminaries of science have been extinguished, and the brightest gems of the human intellect trampled under foot; that jealousy, ambition, cruelty, and revenge, have acted their dreadful parts in awful succession, and have produced a scene of calamity unexampled in history, is but too true; but such was the price that France was compelled, by Europe, to pay for her independence on foreign powers; and in this view the purchase was, after all, cheaply made. The principle which carried that nation through all her difficulties, was the determination of the people to rally round the existing government, *whatever that government might be*, to join in repelling, with one hand, and one voice, the common enemy. To this

they have sacrificed their ease, their property their friends, their families, their lives, with a prodigality which excites at the same instant admiration and horror. But in this they have, as a nation, found their safety. By this they have prevented the still more dreadful consequences that must have resulted from a civil war; in which one half of the nation might have been arrayed in arms against the other, and the contending parties might have exposed a depopulated and bleeding country to be the prey of the first invader. By this they have disappointed the hopes of those who presumptuously partitioned out the provinces of France, like the kingdom of Poland, and who foresaw no obstacles, but in the difficulties which might occur in dividing the spoil.

Thus the breach of the Treaty of Amiens, incited chiefly by the cry of the war party in England, and which was ventured upon for no assignable object except the possession of the Island of Malta, occasioned, in the course of a few months, the greatest disaster which the established order of things in Europe has, in modern times, experienced, and led the way to those important changes, the extent of which are not perhaps yet fully disclosed. These events, which are supposed to have hastened the death of Mr. Pitt,

struck with a sudden panic his colleagues in office. The reins of government fell from their hands; a change in the administration of the country took place, and the union of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox with that of their friends, encouraged the hope, not only of a speedy termination of hostilities, but of that steady and gradual amelioration in our domestic concerns, which, without alarming the fears of the weak, might satisfy the reasonable expectations of the country. Nor was much time suffered to elapse before measures were taken for realizing those expectations. In the month of February, 1806, an incident occurred, that afforded Mr. Fox an opportunity of displaying that character of rectitude and integrity of principle, which it is the first duty of every government to adhere to, and its chief honour to avow. An unprincipled wretch, pretending to be just arrived from France with matters of importance to communicate, obtained admission to Mr. Fox, and after a short conversation, disclosed to him a plan for assassinating the Ruler of France by fire-arms, from a house which had been hired for that purpose at Passy. Shocked at the atrocity of such a proposal, Mr. Fox drove the villain from his presence; giving orders at the same time to send him out of the kingdom. But not satisfied with this proof of his indignation, he wrote to M. Talleyrand on the

28th February, giving him an account of the whole transaction. The reply of the French Minister, dated 5th March, conveyed to Mr. Fox the thanks of Bonaparte, and an assurance that "*he recognised, in the conduct of Mr. Fox, those principles of honour and virtue by which he had ever been actuated, and which had already given a new character to the war.*" On the same day M. Talleyrand transmitted, in another Letter to Mr. Fox, an extract from a speech of the French Ruler to the Legislative Body, in which he openly expresses a wish for a termination of hostilities. "*I desire peace, said he, with England. On my part I shall never delay it for a moment; I shall always be ready to conclude it, taking for its basis the stipulations of the treaty of Amiens.*" By this correspondence the way was prepared for a new negotiation, under auspices highly favourable to a reconciliation between the two countries.

It cannot be denied that the conduct of Mr. Fox, in this transaction, confers the highest honour on his memory. His letter to Talleyrand is to be considered, as Mr. Fox himself doubtless considered it, with respect to itself alone, and independent of consequences. In giving information to the chief of the French government of an attempt to assassinate him, he had performed

an honourable, but an indispensable duty. Whatever effect it might produce upon the mind of Bonaparte was foreign to his object. If it had been slighted and contemned, Mr. Fox would never have regretted the part he had acted. If it induced that spirit of reconciliation which a noble action is so well calculated to inspire, the result was natural, and could not be raised on a better foundation. Even the political opponents of Mr. Fox ought to have felt rightly on such a subject. They ought to have known, that it was no effort to his great and generous mind to reject the proposals of an avowed assassin. It is not on this account that he is intitled to our applause; but it is because he had the virtue and the courage to bring forwards into public life, and to exemplify in the most striking manner, one of the most important maxims of morality—*that it is never expedient to do evil in the hope of producing an eventual good*; because he could unite the speculative virtues of the closet with the public conduct of the statesman, and exhibit to the world a noble proof, that amidst the rage of national and individual animosity, the eternal laws of justice and of virtue were neither overthrown nor shaken.

In the early stage of the negotiation a discussion had arisen between M. Talleyrand and Mr.

Fox, whether Russia, as an ally of Great Britain, should be considered as a party to the treaty, a point upon which Mr. Fox peremptorily insisted. But whilst this debate continued, Mr. D'Oubril the Russian Minister thought proper to enter upon a separate negotiation; and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the British Envoy, to conclude a separate peace between Russia and France. This circumstance, although highly displeasing to the British Ministry, removed one of the principal objections to the treaty for a separate peace between France and England; but another obstacle then presented itself; and the French Ministers were required, as a preliminary, to agree to the *uti possidetis*, or state of *actual possession* of both countries, as the basis of the treaty. Although the negotiation began early in March, this proposition appears not to have been expressly made to the French Ministers until the 24th of July, when Lord Yarmouth submitted it to General Clarke in an official note. It is true it had before been frequently adverted to, as the basis of the Treaty, in the correspondence between Lord Yarmouth and Mr. Fox; but this was the first instance in which it had been specifically proposed to the French Ministers; and when proposed, it was objected to, as being peculiarly inapplicable to a treaty which was wholly to consist of mutual

concessions, and in which France had already offered to restore to his Britannic Majesty the Electorate of Hanover.

From the documents relating to the negotiation, as laid before Parliament, it undoubtedly appears that the idea of the *uti possidetis* being proposed by France as the basis of the treaty, was rather a deduction from certain expressions of M. Talleyrand, than an explicit proposition of such a basis. In a discussion between Lord Yarmouth and M. Talleyrand respecting the occupation of Sicily, which took place about the 13th of June, the French Minister observes, “*You have it, we do not demand it from you,*”* an expression which Lord Yarmouth, in his letter of that date to Mr. Fox, considers as equivalent to the expression, *we demand nothing from you*,† and as amounting to an admission of the *UTI POSSIDETIS*, as applicable to his Majesty’s conquests. On this it is obvious to remark, that the language of Talleyrand appears to have applied *only to the Island of Sicily*; whereas the construction of Lord Yarmouth renders it a general proposi-

* “*Vous l’avez. Nous ne vous la demandons pas.*” Letter of Lord Yarmouth, 13th June, 1806.

† “*Nous ne vous demandons rien.*” Ibid.

tion;*—and that it is highly improbable that Talleyrand would have consented that the *uti possidetis*, which is a principle of mutual retention, should be applicable only to *his Majesty's conquests*. The admission of this basis was attempted to be further demonstrated from a passage in a letter from M. Talleyrand to Mr. Fox, of the 1st of April, in which he informs Mr. Fox that the *Emperor desires nothing that England possesses*;† but it must be observed that this is not proposed as a basis of the treaty; and that so far from being considered, at the time, by Mr. Fox in that light, he has not in his reply of the 7th of April once adverted to it; but, on the contrary, has there recognised another basis, which had originally been proposed by himself, viz.—that the *peace ought to be honourable to both Countries*, to which M. Talleyrand had proposed to add, *and to their respective allies*. On the 2d of June M. Talleyrand proposes to establish as a

* It must however be observed that Lord Yarmouth stated in his place in the House of Commons, that the offer of the *uti possidetis* was more explicitly made, than appears from the printed correspondence; an assertion which no one will therefore dispute; but which it is to be regretted was not expressly and immediately recognised on the part of Great Britain as the basis of the treaty.

† “*L'Empereur n'a rien à désirer de ce que possède l'Angleterre.*”

basis two fundamental principles. 1. *That the two states should have for their object that the peace be honourable to them and their respective allies, and at the same time to secure as far as in their power the future tranquillity of Europe.* 2. *An acknowledgement, on the part of the two powers, of their mutual right of intervention and guarantee in continental and maritime affairs.* To this Mr. Fox on the 14th of June replies. *The BASIS offered in your second proposition is exactly conformable to the views of our government; provided it be well understood that, "whilst we mutually acknowledge our respective rights of intervention and guarantee with regard to the affairs of Europe, we also mutually agree to abstain from all incroachment upon the greater or lesser states which compose it."* Thus it appears that during all this period, the principle of the state of actual possession had neither been assented to, nor even proposed, by either of the parties; but that on the contrary other principles had been laid down and solemnly agreed to as the basis of the treaty. The principle of the *uti possidetis* was, however, still unfortunately insisted on by the British Ministry, and opposed an invincible barrier to the negotiation, till new events took place which entirely frustrated the object in view.

No sooner had the Treaty of Mr. D'Oubril arrived at Petersburg, than the Emperor refused to ratify it. This induced the British Ministry to return again to the original determination of Mr. Fox, *not to negotiate otherwise than in conjunction with Russia*; and Lord Lauderdale accordingly informed the French Minister, "*That England was resolved not to make peace, without obtaining for Russia ALL THE OBJECTS ON WHICH SHE INSISTED.*" Early in the discussion M. Talleyrand had explicitly proposed, not only to restore Hanover, without any compensation, to his Majesty, but also to give up Malta and the Cape of Good Hope; at the same time observing, that "*Hanover was for the honour of the crown, Malta for the honour of the navy, and the Cape of Good Hope for the honour of the British Commerce.*" This not having been assented to and Lord Lauderdale having demanded his passports, another proposition was made, still more favourable to the interests of this country. In addition to Malta and the Cape, the possession of Pondicherry, Chanderagore, and their dependancies in the East Indies, and the Island of Tobago, in the West. To which were added, as a specific compensation for his Sicilian Majesty, the Balearic Islands, and an Annuity from the Court of Spain to enable him to maintain his dignity. In order to satisfy the demands of Rus-

sia, an offer was also made to cede to that power the Island of Corfu, in addition to the Terms of the Treaty concluded with Mr. D'Oubril; but this was not deemed satisfactory; and the propositions made to the British Ambassador were therefore wholly rejected; Lord Lauderdale at the same time expressly declaring, "*that he felt himself bound to consider the obtaining for Russia the arrangement which she desired, as an object MORE INTERESTING IF POSSIBLE to England, than those points which might be considered as peculiarly connected with her own interests.*"*

This unhappy termination of the discussions for peace between Great Britain and France, is the more to be regretted, as it appears that the terms offered separately by France to Great Britain, independently considered, were such as might have satisfied both the honour of the Sovereign, and the expectations of the British Ministers; but their unalterable determination not

* For a full examination of this negotiation I must refer to Mr. Whitbread's most argumentative and luminous speech on that subject, (printed for Ridgeway, 1807), in which the circumstances of the discussion are traced with a degree of precision, and commented on in a spirit of liberality, which confer equal honour on his understanding and his heart; yet the motion with which he followed it, was negatived without a division. January 5, 1807.

to desert our Russian ally, prevented such terms from being accepted. If any confirmation of this were necessary, it may be found in his Majesty's recent declaration in reply to that of the Emperor of Russia, announcing hostilities against this country; in which it is observed, that "*His Imperial Majesty cannot fail to remember that the last negotiation between Great Britain and France was broken off upon points immediately affecting, NOT HIS MAJESTY'S OWN INTERESTS, but those of his Imperial Ally.*" Thus it appears, that after the close of that negotiation, the war was carried on by this country, not for the defence of any object which France wished to wrest from us; not for the purpose of eliciting from France terms more advantageous than she had already offered; but in order to obtain for Russia *all that she demanded from France.* For Russia, who has now effectually released us from all further interference on her behalf, and left us to carry on our present contest with France—*without an ally, without an object, and without a cause.*

The result of this negotiation tended in a striking manner to extinguish, in this country, the hope, and almost the very desire of reconciliation. This result was founded on the character of those who composed the British Ministry at

that period. Had the same circumstances taken place under another Administration, it might have been supposed that the same spirit of hostility which had given rise to the war, and supported it for so many years, still prevailed; and we might have presumed, that a treaty entered upon in the spirit of peace, by men less inflamed by passion and less prejudiced by habit, might prove successful; but when a negotiation begun by Mr. Fox, and the successful result of which was stated by him, in his last moments, to be one of the two great objects for which he was most anxiously solicitous; when such a negotiation fails under the conduct of his surviving coadjutors and friends, who declare to the country "that the restoration of the general tranquillity "was retarded only by the injustice and ambition "of the enemy." All expectation of peace is abandoned; and nothing appears to remain for the people, but to unite their endeavours in accomplishing the destruction of an implacable foe.

But whatever construction may, in other respects, be put upon this negotiation, and however the nation may suffer from its consequences, there is one consideration which cannot fail to be in the highest degree consolatory; this consideration is founded on the undeniable conviction, that during the whole course of the negotiation,

the British Ministers never, for one moment, compromised the dignity, nor committed the character of the country. Under their guidance the British nation not only preserved her faith to her ally, but continued it under circumstances which might perhaps have afforded her a plausible pretext for abandoning the connection. However desirable the restoration of his continental dominions might be to his Majesty, or the establishment of peace and the accession of territory to the people, these advantages were relinquished, through an inflexible adherence to our fidelity to our allies; a circumstance which tended in an eminent degree to diffuse through the continent the most implicit confidence in the honour and integrity of the British Sovereign and Nation. In the Declaration of his Majesty on the failure of the negotiation, the people are informed, "*that all their dearest interests are at stake, THAT NO SACRIFICES THEY CAN BE CALLED ON TO MAKE, are to be compared to the certain disgrace and ruin of yielding to the injurious pretensions of the enemy.*" If this be considered with respect to Great Britain alone, it will be difficult to discover the grounds upon which it rests, and indeed it would scarcely be consistent with the subsequent declaration of his Majesty against Russia, in which it is explicitly stated, that the contest was continued FOR INTERESTS NOT HIS

own. But if we acceded to the principles laid down by the late administration, that the treaty with Russia was still obligatory upon this country; and consider the demands made by France, as calling upon us to sacrifice our faith to our allies by the breach of that treaty; in that sense, and in that sense only, the assertion may be admitted to be just; inasmuch as no sacrifices we can be called on to make are too great, for maintaining the character of the nation for honour and integrity clear and unimpeached.

But although the non-compliance on the part of France with the demands of Russia, might be a sufficient cause of hostility between her and Great Britain, yet this is rather to be attributed to the unfortunate effects of our having formed such an alliance, and to the necessity of adhering to it, than to any misconduct on the part of France, which could justly widen the breach, or increase the animosity between the two countries. In treating with her enemies separately for peace, France had broken no engagement. In the terms she had offered to Great Britain, she appears to have assented to the demands of his Majesty's Ministers, as far as the interests of this country were concerned. But we had also to contend for the demands of Russia, without whose assent we refused to conclude the treaty. What then

were those demands? Were they such as Russia ought to have expected, or as France was likely to grant? For however we might still remain bound by treaty not to conclude a separate peace, yet even this could not be supposed to be obligatory upon us, so as to justify Russia in demanding unreasonable terms. Between France and Great Britain it had been agreed that a compensation might be found for Sicily; but when Russia again interfered in the negotiation, the retention of Sicily again became a *sine quâ non*. This concession on the part of France, was expected to be accompanied also by that of the extensive territory of Dalmatia, which had fallen into the hands of France in repelling the ill-advised and ill-conducted attack of the allies upon her in 1805, and had been part of the price paid by the Emperor of Austria, at the peace of Presburg, for the security of his crown. Let us then for a moment ask ourselves, whether it was likely that France would relinquish to the dominion of Russia a district which she had thus obtained? and which, from the distant situation of his Russian Majesty's imperial dominions, could have no possible object but to provide him with an additional and formidable point of attack against Turkey, and thus to render him the uncontrolled master of the East? a circumstance which if it had occurred, would at this moment have been

a subject of not less dissatisfaction to Great Britain than to France. Even the proposition made to Russia by France, to relinquish to her the island of Corfu, after the Emperor had refused to confirm the treaty of D'Oubril, was evidently a concession to the interference of Great Britain, in the hope that she would prevail upon Russia to dispense with her other demands. Whether in this instance, the accusation of ambition, rapacity, and unbounded thirst of dominion, be more properly applied to France or to Russia, the impartial reader will judge; but the inference to be drawn from it will be still the same;—that as the non-compliance by France with these demands on the part of Russia, was the only reason for continuing the war, there exists not, at this moment, when those reasons are effectually removed by the avowed hostility of Russia to Great Britain, either any just ground of offence against France for her conduct in this transaction, or any difference of interest between the two countries which can now be alleged as a motive for continuing the war.

Whether the French Ruler was or was not sincere in his professions for peace, I shall not undertake to judge. There is, however, one circumstance which strongly favors the idea that he was so; and which may therefore be allowed to

stand against the vague assertions so generally made to the contrary. As Hanover was to be immediately and unconditionally restored to its Elector, an application appears to have been made, during the negotiation, by Bonaparte to the king of Prussia, to whom the possession of it had been ceded by France as a conquered province, to deliver it up to its former sovereign. This application excited no small share of indignation on the part of the king of Prussia, who is said to have expressed his determination, not to allow himself to be divested of his dominions at the will of the French Ruler. The consequence of this was a most singular complication of affairs. We were already at war with Prussia, who had also refused to divest herself of Hanover, although she had not the slightest pretensions to the sovereignty, and the establishment of peace between France and England might have depended upon it ; yet Prussia was now to be our ally ; and this country had to defend her in a war, occasioned by her unjust refusal to restore to their lawful sovereign the patrimonial and long descended dominions of the House of Brunswick !

As it had before been the fate of the Prussian monarch to remain inactive when he ought to have united his forces with those of the allied

powers against France, so it was now his misfortune, or his obstinacy, to be obliged to defend himself and his newly acquired Electorate, against that power which had conferred it upon him, and had, to no purpose, offered him an equivalent. This consideration did not however prevent the British Ministry from warmly espousing his cause ; and his former indifference to the interests of Europe, his indecent seizure of Hanover, his insulting exclusion of the British vessels from his ports, were all forgotten, in the paramount hope of repressing or overturning by his assistance the power of France. Peace was immediately concluded with that sovereign ; a confidential envoy was sent to assure him of the determined support of this country, and a sum of money sufficient to convince him of our sincerity, if not to facilitate his operations, was transmitted without delay. The rapidity of the French Ruler did not however allow the Prussian monarch to avail himself of the aid of his allies, and after some contests of less importance, the battle of Jena decided his fate. With the loss of forty thousand men, including about twenty generals, he was compelled to retire before the victorious army of Bonaparte. The negotiation between France and England terminated on the sixth of October ; and on the twenty-fourth of the same month the French Ruler visited the

tomb of the great Frederick, at Potsdam, whence he sent the sword and scarf of that illustrious monarch, as a present to the *Hotel des Invalides* at Paris. In three days afterwards he made his public entry into Berlin; and thus a powerful monarchy, founded upon principles purely military, in which every subject was born a soldier, liable to be called into service at the absolute will of the sovereign, and where a system of martial rigour unexampled in Europe, had been acted upon without relaxation for more than half a century, was overturned in the course of a few days, by the newly formed armies and inexperienced conscripts of France.

The bloody tragedy which had thus been renewed on the theatre of Europe, was not however yet destined to terminate. Neither the battles of Austerlitz and Jena, nor the fate of the Austrian and Prussian monarchs, had sufficiently repressed the military ardour of the Emperor of Russia. After annulling the treaty of his envoy Mr. D'Oubril, he once more prepared for hostilities; and encouraged by the promised co-operation of this country, again took the field. In the former struggles between the conflicting powers on the continent, the contest, though sanguinary, had been short, and one or two engagements had decided the fate of an empire; but the

combat between France and Russia exhibited a very different spectacle. The incalculable resources of the immense territory of the Czars, were opposed to the military population of France and her dependant states; the obstinate courage of the Russian soldiery, to the impetuous ardour of the French. Amidst all the difficulties of climate and of season, a warfare was continued for several months, in which the victory was often doubtful; but the successes of the French in the bloody contests of Bergfield, Dep-pin, Hof, Eylau, and Friedland, broke the strength and extinguished the hopes of the Russians. Compelled to negotiate for his safety, the king of Prussia was obliged to consent to the dismemberment of his dominions, and to relinquish a population of five millions of subjects, in order to be allowed to retain the remainder. As the storm of war approached towards Petersburg, the Emperor of Russia began to dread the result of a contest in which so many of his powerful coadjutors had been overthrown. A conference between the two sovereigns accordingly took place, and the treaty of Tilsit restored the continent of Europe to a mournful tranquillity.

Of the part which Great Britain acted in this dreadful struggle, it is not necessary to say much. The inefficiency of that union between her and

Russia, which had been so triumphantly dwelt upon, as likely to restrain or overturn the power of France, soon became manifest. In a contest with an enemy whose promptitude is his distinguishing characteristic, the services which either of these powers could render to the other were, comparatively, of no avail. Debarred by her natural situation, it was not in the power of Great Britain to assist her ally by the aid of a single man, or even to effect a diversion of any importance in his favour; and she thus stood a silent spectator of the additional ruin to the governments of Europe, consequent upon the fatal rejection of the terms offered but a few months before by the ruler of France.

In the mean time a change had taken place in the British Ministry, founded on one of the most extraordinary popular delusions ever practised on the credulity of a nation. As the new ministers consisted chiefly of those who had supported with undeviating pertinacity the war system, it was not to be expected that any change of measures favourable to a pacification was likely to take place. In the treaty of Tilsit, an article had been introduced, by which the Russian sovereign offered his mediation to any propositions for peace between France and Great Britain, provided such propositions were made within the

space of one month ; an opportunity which was suffered to elapse without any effectual method being taken to improve it. The important alteration in the aspect of public affairs, produced by the subjugation of Prussia, the humiliation of Russia, and the treaty of Tilsit, operated however like a sudden shock upon the British Ministry ; and in one of those paroxysms to which associations of men are not less liable than individuals, they eagerly grasped at the first idea that presented itself as likely to counteract its effects. Amidst all the convulsions which Europe had experienced in consequence of the revolution in France, the kingdom of Denmark had, by the wise and temperate policy of her ruler, been in a great measure preserved from the fatal consequences of those commotions which had overturned governments of much greater political importance. This had been accomplished, not by humiliating herself to any of the belligerent powers ; not by espousing the cause of such of them as appeared for the moment to be successful ; but by maintaining a firm, dignified, and undeviating independence, neither influenced by intrigues nor intimidated by threats. Her naval and military establishments, though not great, were respectable, and combining with the natural advantages of her situation, might justify her in the hopes of defending herself with success

against any enemy that should attempt to infringe upon her neutrality. In order to defend this neutrality, the Danish government had, for a considerable time past, concentrated its army on its continental frontiers ; and it has been stated, that this measure was adopted at the instance of Great Britain, as being favourable to the protection of her commerce. In this situation the British fleet, with a large military force, arrived on the coast of Zealand, where the Danish government saw no reason to recognise them in any other character than that of friends and protectors. They were there joined by the German legion from the isle of Rugen ; and Mr. Jackson the British resident at Copenhagen, according to instructions received from his Court, demanded from the Danish Government the surrender of their navy to his Britannic Majesty, to be detained by him until the restoration of a general peace. This proposition was indignantly rejected ; in consequence of which the troops were landed ; and a proclamation was published by Lord Cathcart, the Commander in Chief, stating the motives and objects of such a proceeding, and threatening, that in case of resistance *the city of Copenhagen* should be desolated BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS OF DEVASTATION. Unprepared as the city then was, the Crown Prince gave orders that it should be defended to the last extremity. Of

the Danish navy, not a ship was rigged, and the crews were absent. On the second day of September, the British troops commenced the attack, on three sides of the city, which continued for several days without intermission; during which 6500 shells were thrown into the town, which was soon on fire in upwards of thirty places. The timber yards were consumed; the powder magazine blew up; the steeple of the cathedral church was in a blaze, and fell amidst the continual shouts of the British troops. From the mode of attack which had been adopted, hostilities were not confined to the Danish soldiery and the armed burghers engaged in the defence of the city, but extended to the inhabitants of both sexes: the aged, the young, the infirm, the sick, and the helpless, for whose safety no opportunity was afforded of providing, and great numbers of whom perished by the bursting of the shells, the fire of the artillery, and the innumerable accidents consequent on so dreadful and unexpected an attack. It soon appeared that the city was unable to make an effectual resistance; the British forces having approached with their trenches so near, as to be enabled to set it on fire whenever they pleased. To prevent this consummation of misery, the Danish commander assented to terms of capitulation, by which he agreed to surrender up the fleet, upon condition

that the British army should evacuate the island of Zealand within six weeks, and that public and private property should in the mean time be respected.

Soon after the accomplishment of this very extraordinary and, unprecedented transaction, a Declaration was issued by the British government, for the avowed purpose of justifying it to Europe and to the world. As the facts were notorious and indisputable, no attempt is there made to palliate, in any respect, the horrors that attended it, and the Declaration is confined to reasons of justification only.

The first argument relied upon is "*the CRUEL NECESSITY which obliged the British sovereign to have recourse to acts of hostility against a nation, with which it was his most earnest desire to have established the relations of common interest and alliance.*" This passage contains the complete avowal of the principle upon which the British ministry acted. It presumes not only that the laws of morality and justice, and the rules of good faith which attach one individual or one nation to another, may be dispensed with from temporary motives, but that either of the parties has a right to judge of such motives, and to disregard those rules, whenever he may think

proper. That this doctrine cannot be supported, must be apparent to every one, from the slightest observation of the consequences to which it must lead. At no period of society have mankind been so lost to the dignity of their nature and the interests of their association, as to avow it. Even states and sovereigns at war, under circumstances of the utmost exasperation, have rejected it with horror ; and it may truly be said, that the establishment of such a maxim, even between belligerent powers, is all that is now wanting to complete the downfall of Europe, and destroy the hopes of mankind. Jealousy, hatred, assassination, poison, treachery, cruelty, and revenge, are its instruments, to be indiscriminately employed *as necessity requires*, and upon these grounds every crime and every atrocity may be equally justified.

That such doctrines have of late been asserted in this country in the most open and profligate manner, is a dreadful symptom of that moral and intellectual depravity which precedes the fall of nations. To read the daily effusions of some of our popular writers, one would suppose that the human race was not the offspring of one common parent. By one reverend divine we were some time since told from the pulpit, in the face of a learned university, *that the nations*

of the earth have no laws in common, and that, where there is no law there can be no transgression. That they are to be considered as so many wild beasts; and that the strongest, when it has the power, has also the right to destroy the weakest. A political writer, whose works have obtained a very extensive circulation in this country, has also dared to insult the common feelings and the common sense of mankind, by asserting, that *might constitutes right, that, with the maritime strength which this country now possesses, not a ship belonging to any other power should be suffered to pass the seas, but upon conditions prescribed by us; and to this he very impartially adds, that Bonaparte has also a right, where not prohibited by a previous positive contract, to make what conquests he pleases.* These absurd and extravagant positions are however more likely to open the eyes of the public, than to obtain its assent. To little purpose, indeed, must that man have studied, either within the walls of a college or without, who does not know, that all laws have existed prior to the promulgation of them, and that it was as unlawful to rob or murder, before the prohibitory precept was committed to writing, as it has been since. It is on this very idea that Montesquieu has founded his immortal work, which is, in fact, an inquiry into laws as they subsist in the nature of things, and not in either positive pre-

cepts, or actual practice. "*Intelligent beings,*" says he, "*have laws which they have made; but they have also laws which they have not made. To say that there is nothing just or unjust but what is commanded or forbidden by positive law, is to say, that before the circle was traced, all its radii were not equal.*"—But why resort to these authorities for truths which have received the highest sanction? Are not nations uniformly spoken of in the sacred writings, as accountable, collectively, for their moral conduct? as being just or unjust; oppressors, or oppressed? and are they not, as such, punished or rewarded. A proof, not only that the Supreme Being imposes this responsibility upon them, but that the knowledge and opinion of it has been admitted and acted upon through all ages, and that it has been reserved for the present day to discover that a nation is bound by no laws, human or divine, but that if it has the power, it has also the right to rob, murder, massacre, and despoil all that are unable to resist its violence, and may excuse its enormities under the pretext of *cruel necessity*. What then is this horrible doctrine, that disowns all responsibility? that contemns the idea of a moral Providence, and condescends not to justify its atrocities but by its will. What is it but a direct apostacy from the Creator and common Father of all his creatures? The crime, which as it is in

its consequences of all others the most extensively injurious and destructive to the interests and the happiness of mankind, is uniformly represented as the most peculiarly obnoxious to the Divine displeasure; and which, under the just dispensations of an over-ruling Providence, cannot fail to subject all who dare to avow it, to the awful denunciations recorded against those who shall disregard that great precept, equally applicable to nations as to individuals, **TO DO JUSTICE; TO LOVE MERCY; and to WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD.**

The assertion of such a principle as I have been animadverting upon, by the British Ministry, is the more unpardonable, as they had before them the recent example of one of their predecessors, who, in rejecting the proposition made to him to assassinate the ruler of France, had placed this important subject in the most striking point of view. It was indeed but too apparent, from the observations to which this circumstance gave rise in the House of Commons, on the part of some of those who now direct the affairs of this country, that the conduct of Mr. Fox on that occasion was beyond their comprehension, and consequently not likely to be the object of their imitation. Happily, however, for the best interests of society, it is this conduct which has

erected a standard for modern times, by which we may form a proper and infallible estimate of the conduct of those in power; and, if we measure by this the late inglorious attack upon Copenhagen, we shall find no difficulty, either in determining the characters of those who promoted it, or in discovering, that under similar circumstances Mr. Fox would have rejected such an idea with horror.

The next ground of justification is, "*that his Majesty had received the most positive information of the determination of the present Ruler of France, to occupy the Danish territories, for the purpose of injuring the British commerce, and availing himself of the aid of the Danish marine for the invasion of Great Britain and Ireland.*"

Undoubtedly under such circumstances it would have been criminal in his Majesty's Ministers not to have interfered. But was it necessary that this interference should be in the nature of a hostile attack upon Denmark? upon a power who could only have subjected herself to the resentment of the enemy by refusing to violate her neutrality, and to relinquish her pacific alliance with this country? On the contrary, these circumstances called upon us in the most imperious manner, by every tie of justice, of honour, and of policy, to afford to Denmark every assistance in our power

in repelling the unjust aggression. That this might have been done with effect, by the union of the British arms and fleets with those of Denmark, can admit of no doubt. The insular situation of Zealand, and the superiority of the allied fleets over any that could be brought against them by the rest of the world, would have insured the most brilliant success. The consequences of this conduct would have been the preservation of that character for rectitude and integrity in our public relations, to which this country has always aspired, and which was, in fact, the chief motive for continuing the war. We should thus have secured the nearer attachment and confidence of a people naturally devoted to our interests, whose Sovereign is closely allied to our own, and who, from every previous circumstance, had a right, instead of hostility, to expect assistance. We should have raised up a standard before which the character and pride of France would have been humbled to the dust, and around which all that is great and independent in Europe would have rallied, in full confidence that the integrity of Great Britain was inflexible. We should have provided for the safety, and secured the independence of Sweden, who now stands before her powerful enemy—

“ Single, unpropped, and nodding to her fall.”

We should have done away all pretexts for the hostility of those continental powers with whom we are now at enmity, and should have entitled ourselves to the involuntary respect and admiration even of our enemies themselves.

If it had happened that Denmark had, of her own accord, thrown off her pacific connections with Great Britain, and intentionally entered into the views of France, this would indeed have afforded a better apology for the conduct of the British Ministry, although it may be doubted whether even this would have justified the treacherous and sanguinary nature of the attack.—But no such pretext is even alluded to in the justification.—On the contrary, Denmark is said to be threatened by France with a hostile army on her frontiers, and that she had shewn on a former occasion that she was not able to resist the operation of external influence, and the threats of a formidable neighbouring power.—The natural and proper result of this is, that she ought to have been supported by us in defending herself. If she had been criminal, punish her; but if she was weak, protect her.—Thus we should at the same moment have converted a neutral into an ally, and raised that ally to importance; a part of the policy of the present Ruler of France, which it would be much better

for this country to have imitated, than to have contended with him in that course of conduct by which he is stated to have inspired so much dread into the nations of the world; the honour of which we are now determined he shall no longer reserve to himself.

Such are the considerations that arise upon the statement of ministers, that France was meditating an immediate attack upon the Danish territories; but it must be further observed, that even this rests hitherto upon their own assertion only; and that the declaration has not disclosed a single fact, nor alleged a single circumstance in support of it, further than "*the notorious and repeated declarations of the enemy, its recent occupation of the towns and territories of other neutral states, and the préparations actually made for collecting a hostile force upon the frontiers of his Danish Majesty's continental dominions;*" circumstances which, if they had existed, would have been as well known to the rest of Europe as to his Majesty's ministers. Of these reasons the last is the most important, as the assembling of French troops on the Danish confines, would certainly be a just cause of vigilance and suspicion; but when we examine the phraseology adopted by ministers on this occasion, we shall find that no such assembling is in fact asserted;

and it is only that *preparations were made for collecting* a force for the purpose. Whether ministers have in their possession such documents as will demonstrate to the public and the world, that they had at least a just foundation for their fears, or whether on the contrary, the additional disgrace awaits them, of having alleged the projected attack upon Denmark by France, as a pretext for their own unjust aggression, a short time will now shew ; but if we may judge from an expression in the subsequent declaration of this country against Russia, in which it is asserted *that his Majesty's justification in his expedition against Copenhagen is already before the world*, there seems little reason to expect those satisfactory elucidations of the intentions of France, without which the perpetrators of the transactions here alluded to, have incurred a responsibility, for which it is to be hoped they will ere long be called to a serious account.

The third reason alleged in the declaration, as a justification for the attack upon Copenhagen, is, *The example of France,—“ It was time,”* we are told, *“ that the effects of that dread which France has inspired into the nations of the world, should be counteracted by an exertion of the power of Great Britain, called for by the exigency of the crisis, and proportioned to the*

"*magnitude of the danger.*"—Thus then, after all the accusations poured out by this country against the French Ruler; his unbounded ambition, his disregard of alliances, his oppression of friendly and neutral states, it is openly confessed that we have ourselves adopted a similar course of conduct, and intend henceforth to contend with him in the race of iniquity.—The example of France is now no longer *a warning*, but *a pattern* for Great Britain; and after having so long condemned the policy of Bonaparte, we are at length become converts to it and confess it to be right. Apostates to the cause of virtue, independence, and integrity, which we pretend to have so long supported, we now openly acknowledge that it cannot contend with that of iniquity and oppression. The *dread* inspired into the nations of the world by the French, is to be rivalled by the dread inspired by the English; and it must be owned that our first effort, as exhibited in our attack upon Copenhagen, gives us a fair title to that "bad eminence," which it seems is now become the great object of our ambition. Conquerors in open war have indeed been cruel and unsparing to their enemies; governments which have displayed an open hostility to more powerful states, or which, after repeated remonstrances, have persevered in maintaining alliances supposed to be injurious to a

belligerent and successful power, have been changed or extinguished ; but this is the first instance on record, where the capital of a long established nation has been surprised by the arms of a state in strict alliance, not only without notice and without remonstrance, but without the slightest charge of misconduct against either the sovereign or the people. And desolated by *every possible means of devastation*. It is impossible that any example in civilized history can be alleged to justify such an attack ; and if a model is to be found, it can only be amongst the barbarian hordes of Africa.

If, from examining into the nature of these transactions, in which so many peaceable and unoffending persons have suffered a political martyrdom, we turn to contemplate the consequences to which it has already given rise, we shall not be less struck with the impolicy, than we have already been with the iniquity of such a transaction. Whether wisely or not, it has for a long time been the anxious endeavour of this country to maintain an intimate connection with the continental powers, for the continuance of which it has made the most incredible sacrifices. Of these, not even the overwhelming power of Bonaparte had been able entirely to deprive us. Austria, amidst all the vicissitudes of the san-

guinary wars in which she had been engaged, and even after she was compelled to accede to an alliance with France for the security of her crown, was still favourably disposed towards this country. Russia, although she too had been obliged to accept of the terms proposed by Bonaparte, had endeavoured to manifest her attachment to England by an offer to become the mediator for a peace between England and France. Sweden was attached to the cause of England, or rather hostile to that of France, to a romantic degree; and Denmark, although she appears to have maintained a strict neutrality, was doubtless inclined rather to increase than to weaken her natural alliance with England. How deplorably has this aspect of affairs been changed by the attack upon Copenhagen! In the first place, it has thrown Denmark into the arms of France. We have indeed obtained eighteen ships of the line, which are not of the least use to us; but the seamen which should have manned them, and who might by just and temperate measures have been engaged in our cause, are now destined to serve in the fleets of our enemies, to whom their assistance is invaluable. In the sovereign, the ministers, and the people of Denmark, we have excited a resentment in some degree commensurate to the outrage committed upon them. All our offers of peace and reconciliation have met not only with refusal,

but contempt; and the severest measures of retaliation have been adopted against British subjects in the Danish states.

These effects were such as any man acquainted with the true springs of human conduct, would have foreseen, and as any minister who respected either himself or his country, would most anxiously have deprecated. Austria no sooner received intelligence of the attack by this country upon Denmark, than she is said to have declared war against England, and to have dismissed her ambassador. The ports of Holland and other parts of the continent were more rigidly closed, and new restrictions imposed upon the commerce of this country. Even the emperor of Russia, on account of whose interests we had made such sacrifices, and for whom we had continued the war when terms satisfactory to ourselves were offered by France, regarding this transaction of the British Ministry as a renunciation of all the ties of honour and good faith, and as an act of violence committed in a sea, the safety of which was peculiarly under his guarantee, issued a proclamation amounting to an express declaration of war against England. In this document, which nothing could justify or extenuate but the most flagrant violation, on the part of this country, of every principle of morality, honour, and good faith, he not

only refuses his mediation for effecting a peace between Denmark and England, the request of which he considers as a personal insult, but declares "*that he annuls for ever every preceding convention between England and Russia, proclaims anew the principles of the armed neutrality, and engages that there shall be no re-establishment of concord between Russia and England till satisfaction shall have been given to Denmark.*"

The recent Declaration of the British Ministry in reply to that of Russia, by no means tends to reconcile the breach between the two countries. The Russian emperor is there treated, without reserve, as having made the most humiliating concessions to France, injurious to the glory of the Russian name, and to the interests of the Russian empire, and hopes are therein expressed that he would have broken through his engagements, and again joined in hostilities against France.—By an asperity of expression, which it is impossible for any circumstance of public affairs to justify, France is described as equally and *essentially* the enemy both of Great Britain and Russia, and thus a sentiment is avowed which amounts to nothing less than the signal for a war of extermination between Great Britain and France. At the same time it is asserted, with the most disgraceful inconsistency,

"that the last negotiation between Great Britain and France was broken off upon points immediately affecting, not his Majesty's own interests, but those of his imperial ally." Where then is the proof that England and France are essentially enemies? particularly, when it now appears that Russia has effected her reconciliation with France, and declared war against this country?

Before we quit this subject, it is impossible to avoid considering the difference between the situation in which this country stood at the close of the negotiation in 1806, and that in which she stands at the present period. At that time she asserted her honour and demonstrated her attachment to her ally by the most rigid fidelity and the most important sacrifices. The consequence was, as might be expected, a great accession of respectability to the national character. At present she is stained with the blood of her friends, whom she has attacked by surprise, with every mode of devastation; the result of which has been a general cry of horror and indignation against her, from one extremity of Europe to the other. Thus from that high and dignified rank, which she had till that fatal moment supported, she was, by one atrocious act, degraded in the eyes of the world beyond what language can express. For what purpose then did his Majesty

make the great personal sacrifice of refusing the terms proposed to him by France in 1806, which were to restore to him the hereditary continental dominions of the House of Brunswick? For what purpose did the country refuse to accept the cession of Malta, the very object for which she had commenced the war? For what purpose were his Majesty's subjects called upon to make those additional efforts, which they were told, by the highest authority, could not be too great for the attainment of the object in view? For what, but to preserve the sanctity of our treaties? to demonstrate that no advantages, either to the sovereign or the people, were to be obtained by the dereliction of a principle? and that we might stand in the eyes of Europe clear from the most distant imputation of infidelity to our allies? But the conduct adopted by our present ministers with regard to Denmark, has not only deprived us of these most inestimable advantages, but has affixed a stain upon the British name which it will require ages to remove.

The same unjust and precipitate transaction which has thus wounded the honour and character of the country, has also given a new aspect to our public affairs, infinitely more gloomy than any that has before presented itself. With a revenue which must necessarily diminish with

the diminution of our commerce, occasioned by our total exclusion from the continent of Europe, we are now called upon for greater sacrifices, and have to bear alone the whole pressure of the war. Nor are these sacrifices confined to those of a pecuniary nature. In every contest that may henceforth take place between France and England, British courage alone must be employed, and British blood must flow. We are now effectually deprived of those powerful allies, who hitherto engaged the attention of our enemies, and rendered the continent the theatre of war; and if the two countries are again destined to meet in the field, the next battle that will be fought will most probably be fought on English ground. Flushed with their victories over the nations of the North, and eager to terminate a war which has for a series of years required from them such exertions, the armies of France are returning once more to the shores of the Ocean, impatient for an opportunity of closing their labours in the humiliation of these islands and the destruction of their inhabitants; who, if they now fall, will fall without a friend to regret them, or the arm of an ally to be raised in their defence. This sudden and unexpected alteration in our prospects is the more to be regretted, as instead of inciting those wise, temperate, and precautionary measures, which the exigency of the occasion requires, it is

regarded, by the blind and bigotted promoters of the war, with the most stupid indifference, or the most ill-timed and preposterous confidence; as if these islands had been placed by Providence beyond the sphere of human calamity, or as if their inhabitants had merited by their virtues the particular favour of Heaven.

I have thus endeavoured, as explicitly and as impartially as is in my power, to state the real and true grounds of the war, in which, with a short interval, we have now been fifteen years engaged, and which, after having begun with all Europe in alliance with us against France, we are now continuing with all Europe in alliance with France against us. In the usual course of affairs it is not requisite for the people at large to interfere with their opinions in matters of government; but there are times when it is not only proper, but necessary; and if ever such a period existed, it is at the present moment. It is now become the business of every individual, of every rank, to examine into the *causes*, the *object*, and the *consequences* of a war which has so long oppressed and harassed the country. If it should appear, as I have before attempted to shew, that the war which begun in 1803, was instigated by a few interested and unprincipled individuals, and by a spirit of animosity and rancour, which blew up

into a conflagration, a contemptible dispute about the island of Malta, that in the year 1806, peace might have been established, if we had not preferred the interests of Russia to our own, and that this cause of hostilities between France and Great Britain, is now removed by the treaty of Tilsit and the declaration of war by Russia against Great Britain, it will then be incumbent on us most calmly and seriously to inquire, what are the present grounds which upon any principles of common humanity, common sense, or common interest, ought to keep the two countries at enmity with each other. If upon mature reflection we find that such grounds really exist, this examination will only tend to unite us more closely in the prosecution of the war, and to reconcile us to such further sacrifices as we may yet be called upon to make. If, on the contrary, we find that the reasons alleged in support of the war are weak and futile, and that its further prosecution promises no advantages equal to the difficulties and dangers we must inevitably incur from it, we may then think it advisable, without relaxing in those efforts which are necessary for carrying it on, to approach the throne of a sovereign whose interest and happiness are essentially connected with those of his people; and in dutiful and loyal addresses, to entreat that he would, when a proper opportunity occurs, adopt such

measures as he may conceive to be most likely for restoring to these Kingdoms the blessings of peace.

If it be true, as we are every day reminded by the advocates for the war, that we are to contend for our constitution, our liberties, our religion, and our laws, it is only because we ourselves bring them voluntarily forwards, and submit them to the hazard of the die. At what period, since the revolution in France, has the French Government proposed to us that we should relinquish or divest ourselves of any of these invaluable treasures?—If we look either to the treaty of Amiens, the discussions on the war in 1803, or the negotiations in 1806, we find no traces of any propositions on the part of France, which could infringe in the slightest degree upon the independence, the interest, or the prosperity of this country. Even the complaints made by the French Ruler against the licentiousness of the British press, were abandoned, and eventually formed no part of the discussions. In the negotiations in 1806, we shall find, that so far from any concessions being required from us, every demand upon which we insisted *as essential to the interests of this country*, was complied with. They were, in fact, even more than complied with, and the island of Tobago was voluntarily

added by the French to their own concessions, upon the principle alleged by them, and not by our Ministers, that it was a British island. Is it then in this that we recognise any intention on the part of France to encroach upon either our honour or our interest? or has it not been on the contrary openly asserted by the present administration, that the proffered peace was rejected, not because the terms were unacceptable to England, but because they were unsatisfactory to Russia? If, however, instead of acceding to just and reasonable terms of accommodation, we choose, through motives of animosity, of resentment, of jealousy, or of pride, to continue the war, we then must contend for our liberties, our lives, and our existence; as any individual in private life may, if he thinks proper, stake his whole fortune against a bubble, and has only himself to blame for the result. We might have continued at peace in 1803, if we would have evacuated Malta, as we had agreed to do by the treaty of Amiens; or would even have been satisfied by a ten years possession of it. We might have had it in 1806, with the cession of Hanover, Malta, and the Cape, with the possessions of the French in the East Indies, and the island of Tobago in the West, and with an acknowledged right of interference in the affairs of the continent, if our connection with Russia had not prevented us

from accepting these terms.-----WE MAY HAVE
 IT YET, in all probability, if we can subdue our
 exasperated passions, artificially blown into a
 flame by those whose interest and whose gratifi-
 cation it is to hurry us on to our ruin ; men who
 are lost to every feeling of the true interests of
 their country, and who, in case its constitution
 should be subverted by a foreign power, would
 be the first, not only to testify their implicit sub-
 mission to any government, however tyrannical
 it might be, but to direct its vengeance against
 those genuine friends of liberty and truth, who
 would, under every change of exterior cir-
 cumstances, remain unchanged, and who after
 having defended their principles in their lives,
 would seal them by their blood.

Were we to divest ourselves for a moment of
 that irritation of mind and inflexibility of heart,
 which blinds us to all the evils and horrors of
 war, it would be impossible that we should not
 acknowledge the calamities it introduces, and
 feel a most sincere disposition to terminate them.
 If we turn our eyes to the continent of Europe,
 what devastation and slaughter has it occasioned
 from the confines of Russia to the southern ex-
 tremity of Italy ! If we look to Egypt or South
 America, we still find the same cause for sorrow
 and regret. At no period of society have the

contests of the field been more obstinate, or attended with such a profuse destruction of human life. To the sufferings and the death of the thousands who have fallen, we are to add the misery and the ruin of the tens of thousands who survive them, who have to lament the death of their relatives, their protectors, and friends; and who amidst grief, and hunger, and wretchedness, pour forth their curses on the unsparing sword of war, and on those who call it into action. Nor, though this country, from its insular situation, has hitherto been exempt from these horrors, can we flatter ourselves that we have escaped uninjured. Ask the mechanic, who thrown out of employ by the effects of the war, sees a family, dependant solely on his exertions, perishing for want of that aid which he is willing, but no longer able to bestow. Ask the villager, who is now compelled by the ballot to quit his peaceful occupations, and join the ranks of the militia. Ask the sailor, who on his return from his long voyage is forcibly torn from family and friends, and whose generous spirit repays the hardships which his country imposes upon him, by devoting his life to her defence. Ask the manufacturer, who sees his industry frustrated, and his hopes destroyed, by circumstances which he could neither foresee nor prevent—or the merchant, who finds his exertions crippled on every side, and

who in order to carry on a diminished trade, is reduced to the most humiliating expedients. Even the higher classes of the community deeply feel, in the increasing burthens of the state, the effects of the long continued system of warfare in which we have been involved. It is true, all this and much more ought to be suffered, if we have an object in view adequate to the sacrifice. Life itself cannot be better lost than in the service of our country ; but when it is evident that the war exists not by any irremediable necessity, but is the result of the passions of the wicked, who hesitate at no sacrifices to gratify their resentment, and of the fears of the weak, who in the apprehension of distant dangers are insensible to those which are immediately impending over them ; when to these considerations it is added, that all the grounds which have hitherto been suggested for carrying on the war have ceased to operate ; and that it is yet perhaps at the option of this country to terminate the present hostilities and close the scene of blood ; we may then, surely, be allowed to doubt, whether the sacrifices which every part of the community is thus called upon to make, may not be dispensed with, and whether we have any object in view worth the price at which alone it is to be acquired.

If a just, a safe, and lasting reconciliation be attainable, and that it is not so, has not as yet been decisively ascertained, it may most truly be observed, that there is no country under heaven which can derive such benefit from peace as Great Britain. Possessed of a marine superior to that of all the rest of the world ; sovereign of the most extensive colonial territories that ever acknowledged obedience to a parent state ; superior in capital, in ingenuity, in industry, and in mercantile probity, to every nation upon earth ; what can she wish for, but for that fair and open competition in which she may be left to the free exertion of her resources and the full use of her energies. In a state of war she has her equals, in a state of peace she has none. It may be the policy of a country strong in arms, but inferior in commerce and manufactures, to promote her interests by force, and to compel the countries subject to, or dependant upon her, to rest satisfied with such articles as she can furnish, to the exclusion of the superior manufactures of other countries ; but of this Great Britain stands in no need. All that she has to ask, is a fair and open market, where the skill of her artificers and the spirit of her merchants may have their proper sphere of action. This the restoration of peace would ere long afford ; and by this happy change, some compensation would be made to the coun-

try, for the disadvantages and losses which it has for so many years patiently sustained on account of the war.

It must not however be supposed, that because all former reasons for carrying on the war have either being proved to have had no sufficient foundation, or have been effectually removed, the promoters of it are therefore destitute of pretexts to justify the headlong and violent measures which they incessantly recommend. As one cause of enmity is relinquished, another is discovered still more alarming, and the present grand objection to a peace is, that "*if it were once established, it would enable France to create a marine, by which she might overpower the British navy, and subjugate the country.*" The formidable nature of this objection, and the influence which such a sentiment at present possesses over the public mind, render it necessary to give it a brief, but serious and impartial consideration.

France, it may in the first place be observed, notwithstanding her increase of dominion and extent of coast, is not naturally disposed to become a great naval power. Neither her interests, nor the genius of her inhabitants incline her to it. To Great Britain, commerce is an object of the

first importance. To France it is only secondary. Abounding with almost every article of necessity and of luxury, she can, in a great measure, dispense with foreign supplies; and her marine, except when she has been compelled to make a few temporary efforts, has scarcely at any time been more than a navy of defence. Even in her most prosperous times, and under the most ambitious of her sovereigns, the states of Holland have been her superiors; a circumstance only to be accounted for by the extent of their maritime commerce, and the naval genius of their inhabitants. Apprehensions, it is true, may be indulged till they approach to insanity; and they who have contemplated the astonishing achievements of Bonaparte by land, seem to suppose that when he turns his attention to naval affairs, he must instantly be successful. But in the present situation of France, the cases are wholly dissimilar. In contending with the nations of the continent, he has had the advantages of that acknowledged military spirit natural to the French nation; of numbers, in general, equal at least to those of his enemies, and of talents concentrated in himself and his chief officers, beyond all that modern times have known. By sea, all this is, at present, precisely the reverse. Neither the natural inclination of the people, the number or equipment of his ships of war, including those of all

his allies and dependants, nor the experience and skill of his commanders, are in any degree to be compared with those of Great Britain. That superiority which we at present enjoy, a state of peace would enable us not only to retain, but to improve. In our great colonial possessions and extensive maritime commerce, we possess advantages beyond any that France can boast of; and as these are the real foundation of maritime strength, the ratio of our increase in a state of peace, must, independent of our present superiority, exceed that of France, in a degree proportioned to the superiority of our resources. Our commanders and seamen too, distinguished by naval exploits of unexampled heroism, are already formed by long experience, and will be at all times ready to support the glory of the British name; whilst the naval commanders of France yet remain to be created, and can only be formed by a long series of hostile discipline. It is not in a state of peace that such acquirements are made; and therefore unless France be compelled, by causes which chiefly depend upon ourselves, to make extraordinary exertions to raise a navy, and habituate her officers and crews to naval discipline, there is little probability that, in this respect, she will ever even attempt to become formidable to Great Britain.

Granting, however, for the sake of argument, that France would, in case of a peace, be enabled to increase her navy, so as to threaten the independence of this country, what is our remedy against it ? The answer is ready from the whole tribe of alarmists ; PERPETUAL WAR. This is the avowed object of all their exertions, the sole preservative against all their terrors. Continually haunted in imagination by the spectre, Bonaparte, they cannot sleep in peace, unless the blood of their fellow-subjects be daily and hourly flowing in their defence, in every part of the world. Grant the nation but a momentary respite, and all is ruined ! Their favourite idea is, " that the British Fleets are to remain through every change of season on the stormy coast of the Atlantic, ready to intercept the commerce, and to crush in embryo the rising navy of France ;" and this they consider as the permanent state of the two countries through all future times.

On this new frenzy which has seized the nation, it may be observed that, in the first place, it is impossible for the country long to maintain such a warfare ; and in the next, that if it could, it would by no means answer the end in view. Great Britain, it must be recollected, is, after all, a commercial state, and by her commerce she must

now stand or fall.* Her present unavoidable annual expenditure amounts to more than the entire gross rents of all the landed property in

* Speculations have lately been hazarded to shew that this country is independent of commerce, and that her resources are wholly within herself. As a general proposition, it may be admitted that agriculture is the only foundation of wealth; but this must be taken with relation to the world at large, and it may not follow that the cultivation of the soil, to the exclusion of other occupations, will be the policy of every particular country, any more than of every individual in a society. The fact is, that agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, have all been found to be real sources of national greatness; and it is not therefore from general principles and abstract reasonings that we are to give an exclusive preference of one to the other. How far they are to be conjointly or separately encouraged, must depend upon a due consideration of various circumstances, to which the writers alluded to have not sufficiently attended; such as the extent of territory, the fertility of the soil, the insular or continental situation of the country, and the talents, acquirements, and disposition of the inhabitants. Accordingly, as these are judiciously consulted, the true interests of a country will be promoted, and it is by this diversity of pursuits, and the consequent interchange of productions, talent and labour, that Providence has united together the great society of mankind. To what cause are we to attribute the power of Venice in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when she withstood, both by sea and land, the whole force of Europe combined against her in the league of Cambray? or how are we to account for the former greatness of the states of Holland; the most formidable maritime foe that this country ever encountered? In these instances manufactures had little, and agriculture no concern. How then can it be denied that commerce may be res-

the kingdom; and the increased expense of her navies and armies, to say nothing of foreign subsidies, which it may be hoped will never again be adverted to, but to be execrated, must therefore be supplied from her commercial intercourse, which can alone open a channel for her manufactures, and furnish those returns on which the income of the state so essentially depends. What then can be the consequence of our blockading the continent, but a total exclusion of our ships and merchandize from its ports? In reply to this, it has been said, that "*although Bonaparte holds the continental gates of the market, yet in war we command all the roads that lead to it, and can therefore STARVE HIM into the admission of our trade.*"* Has this writer already forgotten the attempt made by this country to *starve France into submission?* and the consequen-

dered a source of national wealth? That Great Britain derives a considerable part of her riches from agricultural pursuits is indisputable; and every effort to promote them is entitled to the highest praise; but her peculiar character is that of a manufacturing and commercial nation. As a mere agricultural state she would stand low indeed in the scale of nations; but if, in addition to her agriculture, she exert herself to maintain that superiority in her manufactures and commerce which she has already acquired, and secures those advantages by the establishment of peace, she may look to the continuance of her prosperity not only with probability but with confidence.

* *Dangers of the Country*, p. 86.

ces with which it was repaid upon ourselves? or does he conceive that it will be an easier task for us *to starve the continent of Europe, than the dominions of France?* To ground any calculations of the revenues of the state upon the experience of the past, would, therefore, now be fallacious; new circumstances having arisen, which have placed the country in a new situation, the result of which will probably shortly appear in the additional taxes to which the people must submit. It will not therefore long be in the power of this country to make those immense and unremitting sacrifices of blood and treasure, which are requisite to soothe the terrors of these blind instigators of PERPETUAL WAR. But there is another danger not quite so chimerical as their fears. By this protracted warfare and increased expense, we shall, in all probability, bring on, and that much sooner than seems to be generally supposed, that embarrassment of public credit, which may lead to the most dangerous consequences; and may not only give rise, as the same circumstances did in France, to the most dreadful civil commotions, but may open the way to an exasperated adversary, to accomplish that ruin which we are all so anxious to avert.

But, in the next place, the blockading system, even if it could be indefinitely continued, will

not effect the purpose intended. If the building of ships could form a navy, and if the French ruler be inclined to build them, he may accomplish it at various ports, either within the limits of his own dominions, or of those of his dependant allies, without danger of their being destroyed by the British fleet.—Even if his harbours were more exposed than many of them are, his immense trains of artillery and his numerous and well appointed armies, now unoccupied, might be employed in defending them against any hostile attack, until he had raised a fleet which he might suppose sufficiently powerful to contend with our own. Nor will the British navy be able, as experience has shewn, to prevent him from preparing at various places a flotilla of Transports, for the purpose of conveying his troops across the channel for the attack of these kingdoms; which might remain in continual readiness to take advantage of any opportunity of wind and weather to effect a passage. That all this is not only greatly to be dreaded, but is also highly probable, is admitted in the strongest terms by those very persons in this country who are most earnest in support of the war; one of whom has asserted, that “*it would not be possible for us to blockade them all, through every season, and with fleets, and armies sufficiently strong, if our navy were three times as large and as potent*”

"as it actually is."* And yet, this writer is anxious to persuade us that we ought to wage PERPETUAL WAR, in order to prevent Bonaparte from "*replenishing his navy and restoring his marines!*"†—But under these formidable apprehensions there is one consolatory circumstance; that these immense preparations are not the voluntary act of our enemy, who has probably other objects in view; but are forced upon him by the persevering hostility of this country, and the declared purpose of waging against him a PERPETUAL WAR; or in other words, of contending with him till one of the two countries be destroyed as a nation and subjugated to the will of the other.‡ Under these circumstances, there

* Dangers of the Country, p. 110.

† "I conclude therefore, that in relaxing by a peace the naval and commercial embargo to which the enemy is now subjected, and enabling him thereby to replenish his navy and restore his marine, we should incur very formidable new dangers without at all diminishing the old." *ibid.* p. 81.

‡ "He (Bonaparte) says *there is room enough in the world both for himself and us.* 'Tis false, there is not room enough in it for his new despotism and the liberties of England." *War in Disguise*, p. 218. How then did the liberties of England exist so long in the same world with the ancient government of France? or why were Mr. Pitt and his friends so anxious to re-establish that government? Having thought so long to preserve ourselves against the infection of

can be no doubt that every effort will be made by him for the invasion of these islands; which will thereby be kept in a continual state of agitation and alarm; their safety or their destruction depending upon the uncertainty of the seasons; and a thousand circumstances incident to a naval defence, against which no prudence can guard.

But the most important observation of all, on this subject, is, that this unjustifiable and desperate attempt to maintain a PERPETUAL WAR, will not only in all probability disappoint our hopes, but has a direct and inevitable tendency to occasion the very calamities which it is meant to avert. Such indeed are the usual consequences of that extravagant caution, which is, in fact, the utmost extreme of cowardice; and which to guard against contingent or imaginary dangers, thinks no sacrifice too great. In the commencement of the French revolution, France was not military. Her first defenders were a raw and undisciplined soldiery. The attack of her enemies called out her energies, and she has overthrown the proudest monarchs of Europe. Had she been suffered to establish, without interruption, her own form of government, such a result

Liberty, we are now it seems unaccountably seized with a horror of despotism.

would not have taken place. It was therefore the attack upon France that converted that country into a nation of soldiers, and compelled her to have recourse for her defence to a government purely military. In like manner France is not now a naval power; and in a state of tranquillity would be still less likely to attempt it, than under similar circumstances she would have been likely to have aimed at a military character. But if she be compelled to assume it; if she find herself threatened with PERPETUAL WAR, harassed from year to year by protracted hostilities, and she should once be convinced that there could be no termination of them, until she could meet the fleets of Great Britain on the ocean with a superior force, it is impossible to say that the same spirit which has been manifested by land may not be excited by sea, and give rise to that very rivalry which we so greatly dread; an event the more to be apprehended, as she is now associated in the same cause with almost every maritime state in Europe. If the early attack upon France by the allied powers had any other motive than plunder, it was the result of a dastardly and overweening jealousy, which saw, in the supposed establishment of freedom in France, some remote consequences that might endanger the despotic establishments, and relieve the oppressed vassals of other continental governments.

—To prevent these consequences France was attacked, and the result has been that almost all these governments have been overturned, and the sovereigns of most of them driven from their thrones. Is it possible that with such an example before our eyes, we can blindly and obstinately pursue a similar track? That we can consent to become the instructors of France in naval affairs, as the nations of the continent have been in military tactics? That we can for a moment forget, that with such a population as that of France and her dependant states, defeat is no object, provided she be making those acquirements and forming that character, at which, for her own safety, she is compelled to aim? And can it be possible, that after having contributed all in our power to school her armies till they have conquered the continent, we should now begin to school her navies, till we have taught them to triumph over ourselves?

Another assumption founded on the same irrational and disgraceful principle, is, that if we make peace with France we shall bind ourselves up from observing her conduct, or interfering with her on any future occasion; the consequence of which will be, that she will not only be enabled to provide a navy for our invasion, but may, during peace, have all preparations

made for the attack, and may fall upon us un-
 awares, whilst we are totally unprovided for our
 defence. That such an idea could enter into the
 head of any one who has not resigned his under-
 standing to his fears, and does not labour under a
 partial derangement, is impossible. Supposing
 (if such a supposition can be borne,) that peace
 between France and Great Britain were establish-
 ed, it is not the task of a day, a month, or a year,
 to create a navy. We could at all times observe
 the progress of the French in their dock-yards
 and arsenals, with almost as much certainty as
 the operations which are conducted in our own
 ports; and if it should appear that extraordinary
 efforts were making to increase the marine of
 France, beyond what her just defence and the
 protection of her commerce required, we should
 then be justified in inquiring as to the destina-
 tion of such force; and if a satisfactory explana-
 tion were not given, should have an undoubted
 right to stop such preparations *in limine*; or if
 that should not be in our power, to recommence
 the war. Such in fact were the reasons assigned
 by the British Ministry for the renewal of hosti-
 lities in 1803. Nor were they denied by our
 enemies to have been a legitimate cause of war,
 if they had been founded on sufficient facts. It
 was however afterwards explicitly admitted, in
 parliament, that no such armaments in the ports

of France and Holland as had been alleged, had taken place; and thus it appears, that during the two years of peace, no measures whatever had been adopted on the part of France to prepare that navy with which they were to overwhelm the fleets of Great Britain and to subjugate the country. Yet we are continually stannned with the cry, that if peace be restored it will lay us at the mercy of France; and this sentiment, as absurd as it is disgraceful, is now the efficient and operative cause of a war, which even those who support it acknowledge to be hurrying us rapidly on to our financial ruin, and which if continued, must infallibly produce those very consequences which these alarmists can contemplate only from a state of peace.

If reasons like those that have been alleged for the continuance of the war, could be of any avail, what must we think of the conduct of those distinguished persons, who have of late years had the chief direction of the affairs of this country, and who may be supposed to be as good judges of its true policy as the advocates for a perpetual war? In 1801, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Hawkesbury, and the administration with whom they acted, perceived no such objections to a pacification as the fears of the alarmists have now

discovered. In the discussion between France and the same Ministry in 1803, no such cause of hostility was adverted to or suspected. In 1806, his Majesty's Government, under Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, were not prevented by considerations of this nature from negotiating for a peace with France; and although such negotiation failed, this failure is not to be attributed to any such vague and imaginary cause, but to our connection with Russia, with whose demands France would not comply. Even his Majesty's present Ministers, although not supposed to be particularly favourable to pacification, have acknowledged in the face of Europe, that there was no substantial cause for hostilities between France and this country, either from apprehensions of this, or of any other nature; but that the war was continued on account of Russia only, and that his Majesty was contending FOR INTERESTS NOT HIS OWN. Is it then possible that this alarming danger, which is to be the ground of PERPETUAL WAR, was not foreseen by any of those eminent statesmen to whom the sovereign has successively intrusted the chief direction of the public concerns? Had the glances of the Rattle-snake so stupified the senses of every administration, however different in talents and opinions, that they were all eager alike to throw

themselves into its jaws;* or were these discoveries reserved to be made by those, who having given up the reins of their judgment to the guidance of a terrified imagination, have endeavoured, and it must be owned not without success, to impress the country with the same unmanly fears that have agitated themselves?

It would be absurd to suppose that truths so important, and at the same time so evident, have escaped the observation of others. In fact, the conviction of them is more generally diffused than the advocates for the war may be willing to allow. Nor is that conviction less felt because it has not been hitherto generally expressed. To produce this silence many motives have concurred. Such have been, and such still are, the violence and the arrogance of those who clamour for war, that the peaceable and considerate part of the community are deterred from the free and open expression of their opinions. Every allusion to the possibility of peace is regarded either as a proof of attachment to the cause of our enemies, or as a dastardly apprehension of their

* "It would seem as if our deadly enemy possessed, like the rattle-snake, whose destructive malignity and contortive progress he imitates, the power of fascination," &c. *Dangers of the Country*, p. 72.

superiority. To imputations of this kind, however absurd or malicious, few persons choose to render themselves liable. The printing presses of the kingdom are almost all in continual requisition, ready to pour forth the united torrent of their abuse upon every individual who has the courage to assert those opinions which may have a tendency to restore the general tranquillity, and may thereby, perhaps, abridge those enormous emoluments which are now the reward of venality, rancour, and abuse. But although these and other causes, connected with the various relations of private life, prevent the expression of the public sentiment, it is not on that account less deeply felt. Even the difference of opinion which a few months since appeared in the county of York, and other places, where the question of peace or war was partially agitated, arose not from any diversity of idea as to the expediency of peace, but as to the best and most likely mode of obtaining it; and whilst some think that it ought to be sought for by addresses to the Sovereign from every part of the country, others are of opinion that such measures may increase the demands of our enemies, and prevent our ministers from concluding a peace on as good terms as might otherwise be done. Of these two classes of people, the former may, perhaps, be the more obnoxious to a ministry intent on the prosecu-

tion of war, but the latter will in the result be found the more dissatisfied and the more irreconcilable. Suffering in silence, from day to day, the diminution of their comforts and the gradual ruin of their circumstances, yet persuading themselves that ministers will ere long perceive and endeavour to avert the dangers with which they are threatened, they wait with anxiety for the moment that may release them from their sufferings, and may open to them once more a free career for their industry. How long they will thus confide, depends upon the pressure of the weight they may have to bear ; but if we may judge from recent indications, it will not be long before a dutiful and loyal people will approach the throne of their Sovereign, and whilst they assure him of their determined resolution to defend him against all his enemies, will entreat him to terminate, as soon as may be, a contest, the causes and objects of which are confessedly removed, and the result of which promises us no advantages equal to the sacrifices which the further prosecution of it must unavoidably occasion.

Notwithstanding the present appearances of increased hostility between Great Britain and France, there is reason to hope that by a seasonable and temperate exposition of the views of the two countries, the foundation might be laid for

that state of tranquillity which is so greatly the interest of both. Whatever may be the language of Bonaparte with respect to ships, colonies, and commerce, these are not the objects towards which his views will be directed. Much as he has already done, much yet remains to be done by him, even after the restoration of peace, to consolidate and secure his newly acquired dominions, to ascertain the relations and confirm the fidelity of his dependant states, and to lay the firm foundations of that monarchy of which he is ambitious to be the founder. If we interfere not with him in these occupations (and it has abundantly appeared that all opposition on our part has only defeated its own object) he is not likely to entertain the absurd hope of rivaling that maritime superiority, of which if he were to attempt to deprive us, his efforts would be as vain as ours have been to overturn his power on the continent. That this supposition is well founded appears by the uniform tenor of the last negotiation, in which this true and only basis of general tranquillity was repeatedly pointed out; and by the offer on the part of France, not only to surrender Hanover and Malta, but to relinquish to us her territories in the East Indies, to add to our possessions in the West, and to guarantee to us the Cape of Good Hope. If it had been the object of France to increase her

maritime strength and her colonial territories, would her politic and long-sighted ruler have proposed to have surrendered her foreign possessions to this country? Or would he not, on the contrary, rather have grasped at those distant acquisitions, and have sought in the plunder of Holland and other countries to have added to the colonial possessions of France? In any negotiation in which he has as yet taken a part, it has not appeared that he was willing to disable himself from the attainment of any object which he has deemed of sufficient importance to be insisted on; and if he has proposed thus to add to our colonial and maritime strength, there is every reason to presume, however he may threaten, that he has no serious intention of contending with it.

Happily however for this country, we have no occasion to place a reliance on his intentions, or to ask from him the concession of our naval superiority as a favour. If we are but true to ourselves, and do not wantonly sport with those blessings which Providence has conferred upon us; if, instead of blindly aiming at continental influence and connections, we duly estimate our own interests, importance, and security, we may regard all the efforts of France to rival us, as a maritime power, without dismay. In a political

point of view, Europe, since the commencement of the revolution in France, has changed her position. This country must, in some respects, change her position also. Her connections with the continent are, by her own act, dissolved. The balance of power, that chimerical source of war and bloodshed, now exists not even in name. Instead of devoting our exertions, exhausting our resources, and risking our very existence, in a fruitless and destructive contest, let us turn our attention to those incalculable sources of prosperity and independence which have hitherto been so unaccountably and so fatally neglected. Let us attend more to ourselves and less to our neighbours; convinced that if we had devoted one tenth part of those immense sums which have been so lavishly expended in foreign subsidies and fruitless expeditions, in promoting the arts, the agriculture, and the internal œconomy of the country, we should have raised ourselves to a justly merited eminence, and should have added to our real strength, importance, and respectability. Let us establish and consolidate, on principles of justice, humanity, and mutual interest, our foreign possessions and colonies, and adopt such a policy with respect to them as may give additional vigour to our manufactures, and additional employment to our commerce. By a dignified, but

just and conciliatory conduct to neutral states, let us dissipate the suspicions and animosities to which we appear in some late instances to have given rise.* What would then be the proud situation of this country? Standing on her own foundation, independent of foreign allies; extending herself by her commerce, on the one hand to the East, on the other to the West; herself the Emporium of the world. In this conduct we should find not only our interest but our safety, and be equally and at all times prepared for either peace or war. The increase of our commerce will be attended with an increase of the maritime strength of the state. Those apprehensions which operate so forcibly on the weak and timid, that France in the event of peace may rival us in our naval glory, will be effectually removed. We have now in our power the means of great national prosperity; with our manufactures at home, with our markets in the East and West Indies; with the imports from the colonies, and that intercourse with the rest of the world which these advantages will always command, who can contend

* In the present critical and uncertain state of affairs between Great Britain and America, I forbear to touch upon them. The subject would of itself be of sufficient magnitude to form a separate publication.

with us? At the same time the instruments of our prosperity are the instruments of our safety, and the increase of our navy, the increase of our strength. This is the *true position*, this the *high destiny* of our country; and NOTHING BUT A POLITICAL SUICIDE, A TOTAL INCAPACITY TO MEET THE BOUNTIES OF PROVIDENCE AND TO IMPROVE ITS BLESSINGS, CAN INDUCE US TO HESITATE FOR A MOMENT, AS TO THE COURSE WE OUGHT TO PURSUE.

REMARKS
ON THE
PROPOSALS
MADE TO GREAT BRITAIN,
FOR OPENING
NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE,
IN THE YEAR 1807.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1808.

BY T. CADELL, AND W. DAVIES, STRAND,

LONDON.



REMARKS, &c.

AT the time when I lately ventured to lay my sentiments before the public, in a Pamphlet, entitled, *Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and Consequences of the present War, and on the Expediency or the Danger of Peace with France*, it was generally supposed, that since the unsuccessful result of the negotiations in 1806, some propositions had been made to Great Britain, through the medium of neutral powers, for entering upon such discussions as might be likely to tend to the restoration of peace; but the particulars of such negotiations had not then been laid before Parliament.

In that publication it was my object, not only to demonstrate the expediency of peace to this country, but also to shew that no circumstances had then occurred, which could be taken as a decisive proof that our enemies were not disposed towards it; and thereby to remove, as far as admitted facts would allow, those jealousies and

suspensions which seemed to oppose themselves to every idea of future pacification. But although it may perhaps sufficiently appear, that we might, by a more conciliatory temper and conduct, have avoided the renewal of the war in 1803, and might also, in all probability, but for our alliance with Russia, have concluded an advantageous peace in 1806, yet it may not follow, that in 1807, when the circumstances of Europe were so materially changed, the same pacific sentiments were entertained by the French Ruler. Posterity will not fail to remark, that during the administration of Mr. Pitt, the continuance of the war was justified by him upon two distinct grounds, which admirably suited every possible occasion. One of these was, that it was not advisable to make peace with France whilst the British arms were successful;* the

* "Are we, I would ask, to be content with the French relinquishing the conquests which they have unjustly made; without either obtaining reparation for the injuries they have done, or security against their future repetition?"

"With a prospect of success, so great as we have at the present moment, are we to grant them an impunity?"

"I, for my part, have given no pledge that I will not interfere in the internal concerns of France."—Mr. Pitt's speech on Mr. Fox's motion, June 17, 1793.

other, that it was not expedient, as long as France retained her power and influence.* It might therefore have happened, that a sentiment similar to the former of these might have actuated the ambitious breast of Bonaparte, and that after his new successes on the Continent, he might have been less inclined to a reconciliation than he had been in the preceding year. The correspondence on this subject, now laid before Parliament, is doubtless expected by Ministers to demonstrate that this is the fact; or at least, to vindicate themselves from all imputation of being in any degree chargeable as the cause of the present continuance of the war; and to prove that on the contrary they have shewn every disposition, consistent with the honour and interests of the country, for effecting a peace.

That the establishment of peace is the only just and legitimate reason for the continuance of war, is a truth which needs only to be stated, to demand an implicit assent. To this truth

* On Mr. Wilberforce's motion for peace, 27th May, 1795, Mr. Pitt acknowledged, "the loss of Holland, and the diminution of the confederacy; but, *at the present moment*, he contended, perseverance in the contest was *still more* wise and prudent, and more likely to effect a lasting, safe, and honourable peace, than any attempt at negotiation."

the whole of the correspondence to which I have referred, bears constant homage. Whatever may be the views of the belligerent powers, they are all anxious to persuade the rest of the world, that they only carry on the war by compulsion, and that they are at all times ready to enter upon any discussion which may be likely to terminate in a just and equitable pacification. In this respect, the professions and assurances of the British Ministry are at least equal to those of any other power. Nothing can be more explicit than the declarations to this effect, as well in the speech of his Majesty's Commissioners, on the opening of the present session of Parliament, as in the various communications of the British Ministers with foreign states. In the former we are assured, "that if ever there was "*a just and national war*, it is that which his "*Majesty is now compelled to prosecute*; that "*the war is in its principle purely defensive*; "*and that his Majesty looks but to the attainment of a secure and honourable peace.*" In a communication from Mr. Canning to Count Stahrenberg, the Austrian Ambassador to the Court of London, he is informed, "that the "*King has never ceased to consider a secure* "*and durable peace as the only object of the war* "*in which his Majesty is engaged*; and that he "*has never refused to listen to any suggestions*

" which appeared likely to conduce to the attainment of that object."* That these assurances, so frequently repeated and so solemnly made, should have a powerful effect in convincing the world at large, and the subjects of these realms in particular, that Ministers are sincere in their endeavours to obtain the great object which they profess to have in view, is not surprising. Accordingly, the papers laid before Parliament are referred to, by themselves and their friends, not only with complacency, but with triumph, as decisive evidence of their pacific intentions; and we are confidently told, that his Majesty's Ministers have demonstrated, that *the negotiations have not failed through any indisposition on their part to a just and honourable pacification.*†

Under these circumstances, I feel myself impelled to enter upon a brief inquiry, how far this opinion of the pacific views of the British Cabinet appears, from the Documents laid before

* *Correspondence with the Austrian Ambassador, 25th April, 1807.*

† " Neither the *duration* nor the *mode* of the contest can fairly be attributed to his Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Ministers have *explicitly* and *repeatedly* avowed their readiness to open a negotiation for peace, and to put a period to the war, WHENEVER THERE SHALL APPEAR A

Parliament, to be well founded; and for this purpose it will be necessary to state the proposals which have successively been made to the British Ministry in the course of the last year, and to consider in what manner the discussions to which they gave rise have been conducted, and to what circumstances the total inefficacy of those discussions, in producing the desired result, is justly to be attributed.

From these papers it appears, that in the course of the year 1807, three several propositions were made, under different aspects of the affairs of Europe, for opening negotiations with Great Britain; two of these were made by Austria, and one through the medium of Russia. It might, perhaps, be presumed, that the very making a proposal to negotiate, is, in itself, a sufficient proof of the desire, at least, of a pacification; but on this I shall lay no stress; whether it was advisable to listen to such propositions, or not, must depend on the circumstances under which they were made, and the terms and conditions by which they were accompanied.

"FAIR PROSPECT OF OBTAINING SAFE AND HONOURABLE
"TERMS."

From an address of some of the inhabitants of Manchester to their fellow townsmen, on the impropriety of petitioning for peace; and proposing an address to the Sovereign.

On the 18th of April, 1807, whilst the contest between Russia and France was yet undecided, the Austrian Ambassador in London transmitted to his Majesty's Ministers a proposition from the Emperor, offering "his amicable mediation" for effecting a peace between the belligerent powers; promising at the same time "his interposition and good offices," and "inviting the Cabinets of Petersburgh, of Berlin, and of the Thuilleries, to adopt the same conciliatory views, and to enter into negotiations for a peace; in which the essential relations of all the parties interested, should, as far as it is practicable, be combined."*

The answer of Mr. Canning, "accepts, so far as his Majesty is concerned, the offer of his Imperial Majesty's mediation, subject only to the condition of a like acceptance on the part of all the other powers who are engaged in the present war."†

Such is the answer in Mr. Canning's Letter; but in the official note of the same date, by which

* *Note of Count de Stahrenberg, 18th April, 1807.*

† *Note of Mr. Canning to the Count de Stahrenberg, 25th April, 1807.*

it is accompanied, it is said, that "to such
 " negotiations, whenever the consent of the
 " other *parties interested in them shall be ob-*
 " *tained*, the King will willingly accede; and
 " his Majesty *will lose no time* in communicat-
 " ing with such of those powers as are con-
 " nected with him by the bonds of amity and
 " confidential intercourse, for the purpose of
 " ascertaining their views; *and if those views*
 " *shall be favourable to his Imperial Majesty's*
 " *proposal*, of concerting with them the mode
 " in which such negotiations should be opened,
 " and of agreeing upon the principles which
 " (according to the suggestion of his Imperial
 " Majesty) it might be expedient previously to
 " establish, as the basis and foundation of a
 " general discussion and arrangement."*

From this answer, it is reasonable to suppose that the Austrian Ambassador would expect that some steps should immediately have been taken by the British Ministry to consult the allies of this country, and to obtain their determination on the propositions which he had made. The adoption of further measures rested entirely on the result of this previous inquiry,

* *Official Note of Mr. Canning to the Count de Stahrenberg, 25th April, 1807.*

whether the views of the allies of Great Britain were favourable to his Imperial Majesty's proposal; and if so, but not otherwise, the proposed discussions might proceed. The ministry had thus taken the further prosecution of this business wholly out of the hands of Austria, and had informed the Ambassador that *they would lose no time* in consulting with their allies. He must therefore naturally have expected to learn the result of these consultations. Did they ever actually take place? If so, was the determination of Great Britain and her allies ever communicated to Austria?—No evidence of any such circumstances appears to have been laid before the public.—In justification of this apparent neglect, it has indeed been asserted, that the important changes which soon afterwards took place in the affairs of Europe prevented any progress being made towards the proposed negotiation. But it must be recollected, that these changes did not occur till the battle of Friedland on the 14th of June, nearly two months after the propositions made by Austria. The intermediate period, a period of no inconsiderable extent, when the object in view is no less than the pacification of Europe, was therefore open for the purpose of consulting our allies, and availing ourselves of the friendly interposition of Austria; but not a single line has

been produced by Ministers to shew that this interval was improved by them to any such pacific purpose.—It appears indeed that copies of the correspondence between Mr. Canning and Count Stahrenberg were transmitted to Mr. Adair, the British resident at Vienna, and that Mr. Canning afterwards informed the Earl of Pembroke, then on a mission to that Court, that “his Majesty had accepted of the mediation of Austria, subject only to the condition of its being equally accepted by all the other powers principally engaged in the war;” but in what manner that nobleman was to act in consequence of such information, we are at a loss to discover. Certainly, there could be no occasion to dispatch a special envoy to Vienna to inquire into the pacific dispositions of Austria, who had herself made the proposal for a negotiation; and it is therefore probable that his Lordship’s mission was rather of a hostile than a pacific nature; but whatever his object might be, he did not arrive at Vienna till the 3d of July, when a new situation of affairs had taken place on the continent of Europe.* Some correspon-

* See the Earl of Pembroke’s dispatch of July 8, 1807, in which he says that “he arrived at Vienna on the 3d of that month, but was prevented making any progress in the object of his mission, owing to the accounts received of an armistice,” &c.

dence has also been laid before the public between Lord G. L. Gower and General Budberg, in which the British envoy declares, that "what-
 " ever doubts he might have entertained on the
 " subject of negotiating for a general peace,
 " they had been completely done away by a
 " letter from General Budberg to General Bux-
 " hovden ;" but these discussions, it must be
 observed, were also subsequent to the battle of
 Friedland, and seem to have had no relation
 whatever to the proposals of Austria, but to
 have had a reference to the treaty of Tilsit. In
 fact no further communication appears to have
 taken place between Great Britain and Austria
 until the 20th of November, *upwards of seven*
months after the proposal was made, when the
 attention of the British Cabinet was recalled to
 the same subject by a new proposition on the
 part of Austria, to which I shall in due course
 refer. In the mean time, the impartial public
 will judge, how far the assurances of the British
 Ministry, of their *earnest and constant desire for*
the attainment of peace, are consistent with their
 apparent neglect of the most direct and palpable
 means of carrying that desire into effect.

These communications took place whilst the
 result of the continental war was yet uncertain,
 and before the event of the fatal battle of Fried-

land had decidedly prescribed or influenced the conduct of Russia. To consider what might have been effected *even then*, by a cessation of hostilities, which would probably have been the consequence of the opening of a negotiation, is only to add to those fruitless regrets, which the events of the present times have so frequently occasioned.* The consequence of this battle, was the treaty of Tilsit, which was signed on the 7th July, 1807. Humiliating as that treaty was for the allies of Great Britain, it afforded a new opportunity of deliberating on the means of terminating the war. By one of the articles, the Emperor of Russia offered himself as a mediator of peace between Great Britain and France, provided his mediation was accepted within the space of one month ; but although this stipulation was soon afterwards generally known, it was not officially brought under the cognizance of the British Cabinet until the 1st of August, when Mr. Alopeus, the Russian Ambassador at London, notified it to Mr. Canning ; at the same time offering the interposition of his Imperial Majesty

* Lord Hutchinson, in his speech in the House of Peers, on the 9th February, 1808, stated, that during the campaign which terminated in the decisive conflict of the 14th June, 1807, and which lasted only eleven days, there were 1848 Officers killed and wounded, and 27 Generals; and that in the final engagement only, the Russians lost 14,000 men.

for the establishment of a general peace, and requesting the determination of the British Ministry on the subject.* The answer of Mr. Canning, after stating at large the pacific dispositions of his Majesty, requires as a preliminary, the *communication of the treaty of Tilsit*, and "*the statement of those equitable and honourable principles, upon which his Imperial Majesty expresses his belief, that France is desirous of concluding a peace with Great Britain.*"† As this reply rendered it necessary for the Russian Ambassador to have recourse to his Court, the correspondence between him and Mr. Canning appears here to have ceased; and the discussion is afterwards continued between Lord Granville Leveson Gower, and the Russian Ministers at Petersburg.

The objects again particularly insisted on by the British Ambassador in these negotiations, were, the communication of the secret articles of Tilsit, and a frank disclosure of the general views and intentions of the Court of St. Petersburg. In addition to which, it was also desired, that some ostensible proof should be given of the good disposition of his Imperial Majesty towards

* Note of M. Alopeus to Mr. Canning, 1st August, 1807.

† Note of Mr. Canning to M. Alopeus, 5th August, 1807.

Great Britain. The specific purport of this last requisition was, that the Emperor should engage with Great Britain in a treaty of commerce, which had previously been a subject of deliberation between the two countries, and the *projet* of which had been recently transmitted by the Russian Ambassador at London to Petersburg. In answer to these demands, General Budberg, the Russian Minister, "acknowledged the existence of secret articles in the treaty of Tilsit. *There were some,*" he said, "*which in no way concerned the interests of England.** That he could assure him, and, as an honest man, he would not say it if it were not truth, there existed no secret article whatever, which stipulated the shutting of the Russian ports against the British commerce. That the proposed *projet* of a commercial treaty must be considered by the Minister of Commerce, before he could confer with the British Envoy upon it. That it by no means followed, because Bonaparte had communicated to the Emperor of Russia the basis upon which he

* This expression it will be perceived is equivocal, and may mean, either that there were secret articles, some of which in no way concerned the interests of England; or that there were some secret articles, none of which in any way concerned the interests of England. As Lord G. L. Gower did not require an explanation, it is probable that he took them in the latter sense.

**" was ready to conclude peace with England,
 " that his Imperial Majesty had made any com-
 " munications at Tilsit, of the future views and
 " system of the Court of Petersburg."***

From this interview it appears, that Bonaparte had not only requested or assented to the mediation of the Emperor of Russia, for effecting a peace with Great Britain, but had actually communicated to him the basis upon which he was ready to conclude it. The British Ambassador did not, however, press for the communication of this basis; conceiving perhaps that such a request would be premature, till he was acquainted with the secret articles; but only required again, to be informed of those articles, and expressed his hopes that the negotiations for the conclusion of the treaty of commerce between the two countries might still be continued.

It appears however, that at this critical juncture, " a considerable change took place in the
 " tone and temper of General Budberg's conver-
 " sation. Instead of that coldness and reserve
 " which characterized the replies of the Russian
 " Minister to the questions which the British
 " Ambassador had thought it his duty to put to

* *Dispatch from Lord G. L. Gower to Mr. Canning, 24 Sept. 1807.*

"him in previous conferences, he found a very
 "mild and conciliating manner, and an apparent
 "anxiety to remove every difficulty in the way
 "of a perfectly good understanding between the
 "two countries." To what circumstance this
 extraordinary change in the sentiments of the Rus-
 sian Government is to be attributed, we are not
 informed. If, however, the British Ambassa-
 dor, had been disposed to forward the negotia-
 tion for peace, this appears to have been the pro-
 per time for it. He might now, with every pros-
 pect of success, have pressed again for the com-
 munication of the secret articles of the treaty of
 Tilsit; and if those had appeared to be as irre-
 levant to the interests of Great Britain, as had
 been represented by the Russian minister, he
 might then have proceeded to require to be in-
 formed of the basis on which the French Ruler
 had proposed to treat. Such, and such alone,
 was the plain simple path that must have pre-
 sented itself to any person who had a direct ob-
 ject in view. But with this apparent change of
 disposition in the Russian Ministry, other pros-
 pects opened to the enlarged vision of the Bri-
 tish Ambassador, who appears at this impor-
 tant moment to have been actuated by an almost
 prophetic knowledge of the sentiments of his
 own cabinet. *The secret articles of the treaty of
 Tilsit, the basis of the proposed negotiation, and*

even *the commercial treaty*, were forgotten. He instantly recurred in imagination to those happier days, full of hope and confidence, when upon the very spot where he then stood, he was combining with Russia and Austria, for a secret attack upon France. The lessons of experience were for a moment disregarded. The *deception*, though once defeated, might now be more deeply concealed. From his silent chamber the shade of Pitt arose, and hovered over his friend. His spirit alone could have dictated the answer of the British Ambassador, when he replied, "That they could not better serve the cause of Bonaparte than by indulging in mutual recrimination on the past conduct of each government. That he wished *their whole attention should be turned to the future*; and that he was persuaded *if the Emperor of Russia still entertained his former opinions of the danger to be apprehended from the preponderance of France*, the cause of the independence of Europe was by no means desperate."*

Sentiments so enlightened, and which evidently pointed to the renewal of the war on the continent of Europe, seem to have been too much in unison with those of the British Cabinet not to

* 2d Dispatch of Lord G. L. Gower, dated 2d Sept. 1807.

have met with their most unqualified approbation. In his reply, Mr. Canning, with an elevation of style, seldom introduced into the diplomatic proceedings of Europe, informs the British Ambassador, that "whatever may have been the
 " motives or the causes of the change represented
 " to have taken place in the tone of the Russian
 " councils, or whatever may be the probability
 " of the continuance of the system now apparently adopted, his Majesty *hails with the most*
sincere satisfaction the return of those sentiments of friendship and confidence on the part
 " of his august ally, from which his Majesty,
 " on his part, has never deviated, and the cultivation of which is *more than ever necessary for*
their common interests." The British Envoy is afterwards told, "that he *cannot too constantly*
impress upon the Russian Minister, the topic
 " which he had so *judiciously* employed in the
 " late conferences; that in the present state of
 " the world, retrospect and recrimination were
 " worse than useless; and that *the establishment*
of future good understanding, and the concert of
measures to be taken with a view to future exer-
tion, were ALONE the proper subjects of discus-
sion between the two governments."

So much for the *pacific dispositions* of the British Government, and the *sincerity* with which

they engaged in discussions for peace. After having thus directed the attention of the British Envoy to that which *alone* was the proper subject of discussion between the two governments, Mr. Canning proceeds, in the same dispatch, to furnish the Ambassador with additional instructions for his future conduct, as to the negotiations for peace. If it should at first sight appear somewhat extraordinary, that after directions so positively given, as to the only object of continuing the intercourse between the two Courts, the British Ministry should still attend to the detail of pacific negotiations; this inconsistency will vanish when the nature of these new instructions is examined. Besides the objects before insisted on by the British Ambassador, other demands, of a more general and extensive nature, were now to be made, "*before his Majesty committed himself to the guidance of Russia;*" and in particular, the ambassador was to require "a disclosure of the general views of policy of the Emperor of Russia, and of any engagements into which he might have entered, with respect to the different powers in whose fate his Majesty takes an interest." These inquiries are afterwards more particularly explained to relate to the nature of the recognition of the French King of Naples, the movements in the Mediterranean, the surrender of Corfu, and the intentions of

Russia with respect to Turkey; a power with whom, it is said, "*his Majesty finds himself at war, and left alone in the war, FOR NO OTHER THAN RUSSIAN INTERESTS, and from a quarrel espoused by his Majesty for the sake of his ally.*" That these various and important inquiries would, without touching on the negotiation, open many subjects in which the views and temper of the Russian Government might be discovered and influenced, is sufficiently apparent. The Ambassador is then directed "to urge these topics in his conferences *with all the earnestness which their importance requires*, but at the same time carefully avoiding a strain of reproach, and even when he is obliged to confess the suspicion of engagements having been entered into, such as his Majesty cannot but disapprove, conducting the inquiry in such a manner as should lead M. Budberg to believe that his Majesty is anxious rather to find the means of preventing, or remedying the evil, than to discover grounds of complaint against Russia." The great object, however, to which the Ambassador is, in fact, to attend, is again enforced at the close of the dispatches, in these words:—

"Upon the whole, your Excellency will collect from these instructions, that his Majesty

"is as much desirous as ever, to cultivate the
 "friendship and alliance of the Emperor of
 "Russia; that he conceives *the only chance of*
 "*safety for what remains of Europe*, to depend
 "upon the renewal of a good understanding be-
 "tween them; that his Majesty has never, even
 "under appearances the most unfavourable, alto-
 "gether despaired of such a recurrence on the
 "part of the Emperor, to the councils which are
 "best calculated for his own glory, and for the
 "security of his dominions, *as it is now hoped has*
 "*taken place*; and that his Majesty, upon such a
 "change, is eager to forget all that has passed of
 "a nature contradictory to those councils, or
 "inconsistent with them." *

It was however peculiarly unfortunate for these
 splendid designs, that the British Ministry had, at
 this time, too many projects on hand, and that they
 had not accurately calculated how far one of them
 might happen to interfere with the others. At
 the very moment when the returning favour and
 attachment of Russia flattered them with the pros-
 pect of a new continental war, by another com-
 bination against France, the intelligence of the
 arrival of a British fleet in the Baltic was an-
 nounced at Petersburg. This naturally induc-

* Dispatch from Mr. Canning to Lord G. L. Gower, 27th
 September, 1807.

ed the Russian Ministry to make inquiries from the British Ambassador as to its destination, and his answer by no means tended to remove the sensation which so unexpected an occurrence had occasioned. In a few days the apprehensions which Russia professed to entertain for the fate of her ally, were realized, by the information of the bombardment and capitulation of Copenhagen, and the seizure of the Danish fleet. With the information of this outrage, all hopes of prevailing upon Russia to detach herself from the alliance with France, and to co-operate with Great Britain in a new continental warfare, instantly vanished. The discussions for a general peace, already disregarded by the British ministry, except so far as they might afford an opportunity of prosecuting other objects, were suddenly terminated. The changes that at this time took place in the Russian Cabinet, by which General Budberg was succeeded, as Minister for foreign affairs, by Count Soltykoff, who was soon afterwards removed to make way for Count Romanzow, produced no consequences favourable to the hopes of the British Ministry. Some attempts were indeed made by the British Ambassador, to allay the indignation of the Emperor; but the horrid detail of the transactions at Copenhagen closed up every avenue to reconciliation. "How can Russia recommend to Den-

"mark to submit to the affront she has received, "and to endure with patience all her losses?"* was the emphatic question of the Russian Minister. It was to no purpose that the British Ministry humiliated themselves so far, as to declare that his Majesty was perfectly willing, "that the pacification with the Court of Denmark should "be wholly the work of the Emperor of Russia; "that it should originate in his Imperial Majesty's Councils; be conducted under his auspices, "and be concluded under his guarantee."† With inflexible dignity, and indisputable propriety, that Monarch refused to interpose his good offices, to reconcile a difference occasioned by the aggression of those who still appeared determined to keep the plunder they had unjustly acquired.‡ After many fruitless applications, to obtain an interview with the Russian Minister, the British Ambassador received an official note which terminated his mission. In this the Emperor declares, "that he had offered his mediation, in "acquainting his Britannic Majesty, that his desire was to obtain for him *an honourable peace*;

* *Dispatch from Lord G. L. Gower to Mr. Canning, October 29, 1807.*

† *Dispatch from Mr. Canning to Lord G. L. Gower, September, 28, 1807.*

‡ *See the conclusion of the dispatch from Lord G. L. Gower to Mr. Canning, 1st October, 1807.*

“ that England had rejected his offices, and that
 “ it seemed as if her views were not to suffer the
 “ flames of war to be extinguished, but to kindle
 “ them anew in the North, by an event sudden and
 “ novel.”

After noticing, in strong terms of reprobation, the attack upon Denmark; expressing his resentment at the proposal made to him, that he should undertake to convince Denmark that it was for her interest to submit to what had recently befallen her, and adverting to other subjects of recrimination and complaint. The Russian Emperor declares, “ that no arrangements shall take place between Russia and England, until the latter shall have given satisfaction to Denmark;” expresses his expectation that his Britannic Majesty, instead of permitting his Ministers, as “ has lately been the case, to scatter anew the seeds of war, would lend his assistance to the conclusion of peace with France; when his Imperial Majesty would readily renew with Great Britain the relations of friendship, which, considering the dissatisfaction which the Emperor so justly feels, he had, perhaps, already pre- served too long.”

On the transactions and documents here briefly stated, many important reflections arise. And

in the first place, it will, perhaps, be thought remarkable, that a British Minister, in a negotiation of such a nature, should declare, that the *only chance of safety* for what remains of Europe, depends upon a good understanding between this country and Russia. Wretched indeed must now be the situation of Europe, if her only chance of safety depends upon the co-operation of Russia! But it is still more extraordinary, that Ministers, after avowing such an opinion, should have so contrived as to deprive us of that connection, and to convert that very power, in whose assistance alone Europe, and consequently we ourselves, had, it seems, any chance of safety, into an open and determined enemy. If the weight of Russia was necessary to be placed in the scale, to enable us to balance it with France with *any chance* of preponderance; what must be our situation now, when that weight is against us? What must add to our regret on this occasion is, that it might readily have been foreseen what would be the effect produced upon Europe in general, and particularly on Russia, by so violent and unexampled a measure as the attack upon Denmark;—a measure, founded not only upon a total disregard to the acknowledged relations of civilized states, but in an entire disbelief, or an open defiance, of all those feelings of hu-

manity and justice, which even the calamitous events of the present times have not wholly extinguished among mankind.

Of the just censure which must eventually attach to the advisers and promoters of this precipitate measure, in a political view, they are themselves, although too late, aware; and accordingly every effort is made by them to demonstrate, that the alienation of Russia from this country was not occasioned by the attack upon Denmark, but is wholly to be attributed to the previous successes of the French, and the treaty of Tilsit. How far these ideas may be confirmed by any papers which have not hitherto been laid before the public, it is impossible to determine; but it may safely be pronounced that they remain wholly unsupported by such as have been hitherto adduced; and that, on the contrary, these documents indisputably prove that the transactions which took place at Copenhagen were the direct and immediate cause of the final alienation of Russia from this country. Until that event, the British Ministry had not only met with attention and respect from the Russian Cabinet, but had been induced even to flatter themselves that they might avail themselves of this friendly disposition to such a degree, as to detach the Emperor from his

engagements with France; but no sooner was the intelligence of the capture of Copenhagen received at Petersburg, than a very different disposition on his part became manifest. Even in the Russian official note of the 1st September, which, although it purports to bear date *after* the intelligence of the surrender of Copenhagen is *said* to have arrived at Petersburg, was, from the nature of its contents, evidently written whilst the *investment* only of that place by the British arms was known,* the utmost anxiety is expressed as to the consequences of that attack, and the Emperor does not scruple to represent the proceedings of the British Ministry, as "incompatible with the dignity of every independent power." But no sooner did the final intelligence of the bombardment and surrender

* See the official note from General Budberg to Lord G. L. Gower, dated 1st Sept. 1807, in which it is said that "the English fleet has taken a position which evidently *announces intentions hostile towards Denmark*;" a mode of expression which could scarcely have been used, had the intelligence of the assault and surrender of Copenhagen then arrived at Petersburg.—The same idea is also confirmed by the British declaration against Russia, in which it is said; that "the only prospect of success in the endeavours of his Majesty's Ambassador to restore the ancient good understanding between Great Britain and Russia, appeared when the intelligence of the *siege* of Copenhagen had been recently received at St. Petersburg."

of Copenhagen arrive, than the indignation and resentment of the Emperor were manifested in the most unequivocal terms. A copy of the capitulation of Copenhagen was transmitted by Lord G. L. Gower to Count Romanzow, on the 17th September, accompanied by a short note, in which he expressed his hope that the capitulation might be followed by the re-establishment of peace between Great Britain and Denmark. The reply of the Emperor, dated the 23d September, is conceived in terms of the highest displeasure. He declares, "that he has viewed
 " with infinite concern all the misfortunes which
 " have overwhelmed a monarch, to whom he is
 " attached by the ties of blood, and those of a
 " long friendship; that the silence and reserve
 " of the British Ministry might serve as a proof
 " that they were themselves persuaded that
 " what they were undertaking was directly contrary to the interests of Russia; and that the
 " Emperor owed it to himself and to the interests of his empire, not to shew himself insensible to it." From that moment the British Ambassador appears to have been treated by the Russian Ministry with a degree of coldness and neglect too apparent not to be felt; but which he seems willing to attribute to the interference of the French Minister, and the fear of the displeasure of Bonaparte. That our watchful

enemy would not omit so favourable an opportunity of confirming the Russian Emperor in his enmity to Great Britain, may readily be believed; but after the transactions before stated, it will perhaps be thought that Lord G. L. Gower has scarcely done justice to his own penetration, when he confesses, on the 4th November, "that he is at a loss to find any satisfactory explanation of the wish of the Russian Ministry to avoid communication with him."

If it could be possible that any thing were wanting to shew that the attack upon Denmark was the real and substantial cause of the enmity of the Russian Emperor, it may be found in the authentic and solemn declaration of Lord Hutchinson; the man who by his heroic conduct in Egypt, supported the glory of the British army, upon an equality with that of her navy. This distinguished nobleman did not derive this information through any intermediate or inferior channel, but from the Russian Emperor himself, who openly communicated to him his sentiments respecting the attack upon Copenhagen, and the course of conduct which it had determined him to adopt. The particulars of this interview, as related by Lord Hutchinson in the house of Peers, are too recent, and too deeply impressed upon the public mind, to render it necessary to

recapitulate them, but the strong and indignant sense entertained by that monarch of the enormity of the conduct of the British Ministry towards Denmark, is such as might be expected from every just and honourable mind, and requires particular notice. After stating, "the great concern which our unjustifiable conduct had given him," he added, "*that the French Government had never done any thing so strong. That it justified every thing they had done or might do hereafter.* If such proceedings were admissible, there was an end of all those relations which had usually influenced the conduct of nations towards each other ; *that every body was at liberty to do just what they pleased,* and that he might attack Sweden to-morrow." To these observations he added, in the most peremptory language, tone, and manner, "*that he would have satisfaction, complete satisfaction, for this unprovoked aggression.*" In a former conversation the Emperor had stated that he had been made acquainted by Bonaparte with the conditions of peace proposed to be offered to Great Britain, and that he had no doubt but that even Lord Hutchinson himself *would consider them to be highly reasonable and honourable.* His Lordship also avowed his opinion, "that *the Emperor of Russia was sincere in his desire to mediate, if possible, a peace between this*

"country and France; but at all events he believed that the relations of peace and amity might have been preserved between Great Britain and Russia." The only answer that has been attempted to be given to these assertions, is, that there was an impropriety in Lord Hutchinson's revealing the conversation that took place between him and the Emperor of Russia; as if the cause of truth were to be sacrificed to our etiquette with a power with whom we are now at war; or, as if the country were to receive its impression merely from the bold assertions and mutilated documents produced by Ministers; whilst those honourable and noble persons, who, upon the most decisive grounds, felt the strongest conviction that such representations were unfounded, were not only to dispense with their own just vindication, but were, by their silence, to lend themselves as accomplices to such a delusion.

It is impossible to dismiss this subject without adverting to the very unfavourable impression which these transactions have made on the rest of Europe, as to the character and conduct of the British Ministry in their negotiations. From these documents it is evident, and on the part of Ministers it will not I presume be denied, that although the avowed object of deliberation be-

tween the British and Russian Ministry was to prepare the way for pacific negotiations, yet, when an opportunity seemed to offer for again involving Russia in hostility against France, it was eagerly seized on by the British Ministry, and their future co-operation was considered as *alone the proper subject of discussion between the two Governments.* This line of conduct is perfectly in unison with the new principles attempted to be lately introduced into the moral and political code of this country: nor can it be doubted, that if Russia could have been induced to break her faith with France, and to join in a fresh attack upon her, the promoters of such an event would have conceived that they had attained the perfection of human wisdom.

From several expressions in the declarations of the Russian Emperor, it appears that he considered the British Ministry as not sincerely desirous of peace, but as availing themselves of every opportunity *to scatter anew the seeds of war.* In their justification it may perhaps be alleged that Great Britain had not positively consented to negotiate for peace, and that therefore there was nothing unjust in consulting whatever might appear to her to be for her own interest; that if Russia had violated the engagements so recently entered into with France, the disgrace must have

reated with herself, and not with Great Britain. On this it must be observed, that this is one of those cases, the decision of which will depend upon the preconceived opinions adopted by those who form a judgment upon it. To those who can justify the treacherous attack upon Copenhagen, the negotiation with Russia can require no apology; but to those who conceive that the character of a nation for honour and integrity is paramount to every other consideration, a disregard on the part of this country, of those principles upon which alone such a character can be supported, must occasion the most poignant regret. Is there then nothing criminal in endeavouring to prevail upon another person, or another state, to adopt a course of conduct confessedly treacherous, dishonourable, or criminal? Are treaties of peace only made for the moment? and can the party who has derived advantage and security from them have a right to discard them at pleasure? Is it allowable to assert and to act upon such maxims? and can it be justifiable in the representative of a great and powerful nation, whilst he is ostensibly employed in laying the basis for pacific negotiations, to excite the power that offers its mediation to combine against that very state which has given an opening to such discussions? If such a course of conduct is to be justified, it can only be upon

those new maxims which it has been the disgrace of the present day to have first openly avowed. To attempt to influence those who have the hardihood to assert them, by stating to them the obligations of society, or the laws of civilized states, is a hopeless task. To recal them to a sense of the over-ruling power of a Moral Providence moves only their derision. Let us then for once meet them upon their own ground. Let us discard all that has been obtained by the united wisdom of mankind through past ages; and let us see what the advocates of these new opinions would gain by demolishing all that has been erected, and building their own superstructure in its stead. Let us take the instance before us, and suppose that ministers had carried their object, and been able to combine Great Britain and Russia in a new and successful war against France. Would there then have been an end of human affairs? Would nothing have remained to be done when the present government of France was overthrown? Will no future negotiations ever be necessary? and is it of no importance to have given to the world a decisive proof that a war with Great Britain is less dangerous than a negotiation for peace, in which the proposed mediator is to be seduced, and the opportunity ostensibly devoted to the work of reconciliation is perverted to purposes wholly

the reverse ? The question is not, whether we shall excel our adversaries in the arts of negotiation, but whether we shall relinquish our national character for openness and integrity. Not whether we shall be able to excite a new and uncertain conflict on the continent of Europe, but whether we shall lose the power of allaying it, when an unexpected result may require our interference. Not whether a Bonaparte or a Bourbon shall reign in France, but whether those principles upon which alone the tranquillity and happiness of the human race are founded, shall be overthrown or preserved. Destroy these principles in private life, and every man will suspect his neighbour ; the whole order of society will be deranged ; law will lose its influence, and violence and force will alone prevail. Discard them in public affairs, and the horrors of war will be multiplied ; the soldier will degenerate into the assassin, and nation must be opposed in arms to nation, till one of them be exterminated.

But whatever opinion may be entertained of the conduct of the British Ministry in other respects, the result of this negotiation will indisputably shew how far the *pacific sentiments* so *uniformly avowed* by them were exemplified in their conduct. The discussions were indeed

entered upon with an apparent earnestness on their part, to be informed of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, as preparatory to a further negotiation; but no sooner was a confidential intercourse established between the British Ambassador and the Russian Ministry, than these objects were wholly disregarded, and every effort made to engage Russia once more to take a decided part against France. Even since the avowal of hostilities on the part of Russia against this country, the objects which the British Ministers had in view have been acknowledged, as if for the purpose of exasperating France and Russia still further, in the declaration of the British Court in answer to that of Russia; in which we are told, that "His Majesty had
 " entertained the hope, that a review of the
 " transactions of that unfortunate negotiation
 " (of Tilsit) and a just estimate of its effects
 " upon the glory of the Russian name, and
 " upon the interests of the Russian Empire,
 " would have induced his Imperial Majesty to
 " extricate himself from the embarrassment of
 " those new councils and connexions, *which he*
 " *had adopted in a moment of despondency and*
 " *alarm,* and to return to a policy more congenial
 " *to the principles which he has so invariably*
 " *professed, and more conducive to the honour of his*
 " *crown and to the prosperity of his dominions.*"

The same circumstances which excited the resentment of Russia, appear also to have had a powerful effect on the Austrian Cabinet. But before the pacific relations between that Court and Great Britain were closed, another attempt was made, through the medium of that power, to open a negotiation for a general peace. On the 20th November, 1807, Prince Stahremberg, in the name of the Emperor of Austria, "officially and earnestly requests his Britannic Majesty, to declare his intentions, in evincing his disposition to enter into a negotiation for a maritime peace, upon a basis suitable to the reciprocal interests of the powers who may take a part in it."

In reply to this communication, his Majesty refers to the declaration which Mr. Canning, "in the most regular and authentic manner, returned as an answer to the official offer of Prince Stahremberg, in April," and expresses "his surprise at an application for a renewal of the declaration of sentiments, of which the Court of Vienna had been so long and so formally in possession."

Now, unless some transactions and communications have taken place, which have not been laid before Parliament, the surprise of the Aus-

trian Court might at least be equal, on receiving such an answer, to that of the British Ministry. The latter had, in April, undertaken to *lose no time* in ascertaining the views of their allies. The Austrian Ambassador waits from April till November; and, having during that interval heard nothing from the British Ministry on the subject, he then, by the directions of his Court, renews his proposition. After the expressions of his surprise, his Britannic Majesty adds, "that he will not believe that any further declaration can be necessary for the purpose of proving to the nations of Europe, a sincerity which the nations of Europe cannot question."—In compliance, however, "with the wishes of a friendly power, expressed with so much earnestness and anxiety, His Majesty is, nevertheless *willing to repeat once more* the assurance, *already so often repeated*, that his Majesty is now, as he *has at all times been*, prepared to enter into negotiation, for the conclusion of such a peace, as shall settle, on equal terms, the respective interests of the powers engaged in the war, as shall be consistent with his Majesty's fidelity to his allies, and shall provide for the tranquillity and security of Europe."*

* Note from Mr. Canning to the Prince de Stahremberg, 23d Nov. 1807.

This answer, it must be observed, is, in its nature, essentially different from that given in April. In that, the British Ministry undertook previously to consult their allies, and declined all further measures until the sentiments of such allies were known; thereby wholly preventing the further interference of Austria. On the present occasion, the answer is *unconditional and explicit* that his Majesty is now *prepared to enter into negotiation*.

This answer appears to have been so understood by the Austrian Minister, who accordingly communicates it to the other belligerent powers, and having obtained their concurrence to a further negotiation, addresses himself again, *within the space of about five weeks*, to the British Ministry; acquainting them, that “*in consequence of the pacific dispositions of his Britannic Majesty, announced in the answer of the 23d November, he is charged to PROPOSE to the English Ministry, to send immediately Plenipotentiaries to Paris, for the purpose of treating for the establishment of peace between all the powers at present at war with England;*” adding, “*that, this explicit and frank invitation must furnish a proof of the good faith, and of the sincere intention of France to put an end to the calamities of war.*” At the same time,

notifying, *that he was authorised by France to give passports* to the Ministers whom the Cabinet of St. James's might appoint for that purpose.*

And here commence the difficulties of the British Ministry. Their note of the 23d November, expressed *an unconditional assent* to enter on a negotiation. Upon that the Austrian Ambassador had acted; and had informed them, in reply, that the other parties were prepared to meet the British envoys. The British cabinet suffer seven days to elapse, and then complain that the Prince de Starhemberg "in stating himself to be charged to propose to the British Government the immediate sending of Plenipotentiaries to Paris, had omitted to explain from whom he received that commission; whether from his Imperial master, or from the government of France. That if the former was the case, Mr. Canning was commanded to express his Majesty's concern, that so little reference should appear to have been had *to the correspondence which had already taken place between the courts of London and Vienna*, on the subject of a negotiation for peace."

* Note from the Prince de Starhemberg to Mr. Canning, Jan. 1st 1808.

On this it may with great justice be observed, that if the authority of the Austrian ambassador had been questioned, it should have been on his first communication. By declaring to him their assent to negotiate, the British Ministry had virtually authorized him to communicate that assent to the belligerent powers. What other purpose could it indeed be intended to answer? They had not, as in April, *taken it upon themselves* to ascertain the intentions of any of the parties; but had left the affair in the hands of the Austrian minister, who within a reasonable time informs them of the result; and in order to prevent any misapprehension, *expressly refers to Mr. Canning's Letter of the 23d November*, as the ground of his subsequent proceedings.

The answer then proceeds in the following terms. "After so long an interval has been suffered to elapse since the acceptance by his Majesty, *in April last*, of the offer of his Imperial Majesty's mediation, his Majesty could hardly have expected that the same offer should now be repeated; (if indeed the Prince de Starhemberg's note is to be construed as a repetition of it) without any notification of the acceptance of those *conditions*, which were, *at that time*, stated by his Majesty to be *indispensible preliminaries to the opening of a negotiation.*"

Now to what purpose can these remarks be introduced? On the 23d November the British Ministry declare that his Majesty is *prepared* to treat. The Austrian ambassador acts upon this assurance; and having gotten a place appointed for an interview, proposes to the British Ministry to send negotiators, to whom he is authorized to grant passports. Then comes the answer of the British Ministry, referring—not to his Majesty's *positive* assent to treat in November, but to his *conditional* one in April; and expressing great surprise that the Austrian minister should repeat his proposition, without any notification of the acceptance of *those conditions*, which were, *at that time*, stated to be indispensable preliminaries to the opening a negotiation. Was it then to be expected that the Austrian minister would recur to conditions which the British Ministry had themselves neglected to repeat, and which must, in their nature, be essentially changed, by the alterations which had, in the intermediate time, taken place in the character of the war, and the relations of the different Potentates of Europe? But independent of this consideration, what had the Austrian minister to do with the circumstances referred to by the British Ministry in April? Did it rest with him to consult the allies of Great Britain whether they were disposed to peace? or

had not the British Ministry expressly taken that task upon themselves? Did they ever communicate the result of this to Austria? If not, how can they charge the minister of that power with having been the cause of delaying the negotiation, and with "suffering so long an interval to elapse" after his Majesty's acceptance of the mediation "in April?" After having defeated the proposed negotiation in April, it is certainly too much to reproach the Austrian ambassador, or his court, with having been negligent on the subject; a reproach which appears to have been made with no other view, than to frustrate, under some plausible pretext, the new measures taken by that minister for bringing the parties to deliberate together on the terms of peace; in which it seems he had not been *too indolent*, but *too hasty*; and having conceived that the British cabinet, in their note of the 23d November, were sincere, had taken the proper measures to carry what they professed to be the wishes of his Majesty, into complete effect.

After a long disquisition on the insufficiency of the powers of the Austrian ambassador for entering on such a negotiation; a defect which might doubtless have been immediately and effectually removed, another objection is stated by the British Ministry to their entering on the proposed negotiation, in the following terms.

“ The proposal to his Majesty to send negotiators to Paris, unaccompanied as it is with any ostensible and unequivocal return on the part of France, for the declarations already made in his Majesty’s name, is *so far from being a proof of any such reciprocal disposition*, that it can be construed no otherwise by His Majesty, than as *implying an unjustifiable doubt of the sincerity of his Majesty’s professions.*”

On perusing this passage one is at a loss to conceive upon what possible grounds it can be justified. When two countries are at war, and a proposition has been made to each of them by a neutral state, to enter upon a pacific negotiation; when that proposition has been accepted by one of them, and such acceptance has been communicated by the mediating power to the other, who then desires that ambassadors may be appointed to enter upon the consideration of the subject, is there any thing extraordinary, or informal, in such a proceeding? or is it not, in common apprehension and common sense, the only reasonable plan that the parties can adopt for effecting their purpose? No, says Mr. Canning; as His Majesty has given a pledge of his own pacific dispositions, it is requisite that a pledge, equally solemn and authentic, should be given by France, *before his Majesty can be called upon to make any further advance.* Was not the wish

expressed by the French government, that the British cabinet would send negotiators, a pledge? Was not the authority given by France to the Austrian ambassador to furnish such negotiators with passports, a pledge? and are not *acts* of more authenticity than *professions*? But what follows is yet more extraordinary. It is not sufficient for the British Ministry to assert that the invitation to send ambassadors affords *no pledge* that the French are desirous of entering upon a negotiation, but it is on the contrary to be considered as a *positive insult*, "and can be construed no otherwise by His Majesty, than as implying an unjustifiable doubt of the sincerity of His Majesty's professions." What! does the express invitation to His Britannic Majesty to send ambassadors, imply *an unjustifiable doubt of his sincerity*? How then could the French government have testified their belief that His Majesty was sincere? Surely causes of rejection and of repulsion must have been difficult to discover, when the very act, which of all others manifests the conviction of the French government, that the British Ministry are sincere, is selected as a new ground of offence, and adduced as a proof of *an unjustifiable suspicion on their part of the sincerity of His Majesty's professions*.

Mr. Canning then proceeds to inform the Austrian ambassador, "that His Majesty is will-

“ing to treat with France; but he will treat only
 “on a footing of perfect equality. That he
 “is ready to treat with the allies of France; but
 “the negotiation must equally embrace the inte-
 “rests of the allies of Great Britain.”

“That as soon as the basis of negotiation shall
 “have been satisfactorily ascertained, and an un-
 “exceptionable place of negotiation agreed upon,
 “His Majesty will be prepared to name pleni-
 “potentiaries to meet those of the other powers
 “engaged in the war; but His Majesty will not
 “again consent to send his Plenipotentiaries to a
 “hostile capital.”

These paragraphs, separated from their context, are such as would probably have been considered by the Austrian minister as a satisfactory answer; but when combined with what precedes and what follows, cannot be adopted as the ground of any proceeding whatever. Whilst the British Ministry still insist *that reference shall be had to the conditional answer given by them in April, as containing propositions indispensable to the opening a negotiation*; whilst His Majesty still conceives, *that an unjustifiable doubt is entertained of his sincerity*, how is it possible to found any measures on the more conciliatory sentiments here avowed? Lest, however, the Austrian Minister, finding in the same note a great variety of discordant

matter, should, in his zeal to promote his object, think himself justifiable in selecting only such as might suit the purposes of reconciliation; lest he should apply again to the French government and obtain a confirmation of his powers, a more explicit avowal of their pacific disposition, a statement of the basis of the treaty, or a change in the place proposed for the theatre of negotiation, the British Secretary of State concludes his very extraordinary note, with an effectual prohibition against the further interference of the Austrian ambassador; informing him, "that His Majesty had not directed him to give *any authority* to the Prince de Starhemberg *to speak in the name of His Majesty to the government of France.*"* This reply closed the discussion. Nothing further could indeed remain to be said. A few days afterwards the Prince de Starhemberg demanded his passports; and England and Austria are now at war.

Such have been the circumstances that have attended, and such the fate, of the three distinct offers made to Great Britain in the course of the year 1807, for opening negotiations for peace. The first of them appears to have been frustrated by the British Ministry having undertaken to

* Note from Mr. Canning to the Prince de Starhemberg, January 8, 1808.

consult the wishes of their allies and to communicate the result to Austria; a promise, of the performance of which no evidence has yet been adduced, and the neglect of which cannot be satisfactorily accounted for by those changes in the political state of Europe which did not take place till some time afterwards. In the second negotiation, in which Russia offered herself as a mediator, the British Ministry, instead of availing themselves of the friendly disposition manifested by that Court, to promote pacific negotiations and obtain more honourable terms of peace, were intent only on improving that disposition to excite a new combination against France; until our attack upon Denmark roused the resentment of the Russian sovereign, and instead of a friend and mediator, rendered him our exasperated and determined enemy. With respect to the third proposition; whatever construction may be put upon the pacific asseverations and irrelevant objections with which the answer of the British Ministry abounds, the *positive refusal* to authorize the Austrian Minister "*to speak in the name of His Majesty to the government of France,*" operated as a decisive negative to all further proceedings, and might alone have been sufficient for that purpose, without the observations by which it is preceded, and which are so palpably open to fair and candid remark. Whether mi-

nisters are right in thus declining to enter upon negotiations for peace, when so many opportunities have occurred, is not the question. The object of the present inquiry is only to shew how far the conduct of ministers in these transactions has been consistent with the convictions they have expressed, and the professions they have so repeatedly made, "*that it was not only their duty but their interest, to secure peace as soon as possible, upon safe and honourable grounds, AND THAT THEY HAD MISSED NO FAIR OPPORTUNITY TO EFFECT IT;*"* and how far their friends and supporters are justified, in recommending to the country a further reliance in those assurances, and in representing petitions for peace as not only "*unnecessary but mischievous, and in effect, AS PETITIONS FOR THE PROLONGATION OF THE WAR.*"†

But it may probably be asked, if the present policy of the British Cabinet has determined them to continue the war, what should prevent them from openly avowing such determination,

* Such is reported as the language of Mr. Canning, in the House of Commons, on Colonel Stanley presenting the petition for peace of the inhabitants of Bolton, 22d February, 1808.

† See the address to the inhabitants of Manchester before referred to, in p.239.

and what occasion can there be to elude by so much circumlocution, and so many evasions, the pacific proposals made by the enemy? Would it not, it may be asked, be much more manly, much more honourable, much more consistent with the character of Great Britain, to reject these insufficient pretexts, and to avow the determination, *that England will not negotiate for peace with France?* Undoubtedly it would be more dignified, and more consistent with those professions of frankness and good faith so frequently made in the course of the correspondence by the British Ministry; but a little consideration will shew that this is a line of conduct which ministers cannot ostensibly adopt. What the consequences might be, if Great Britain were openly to avow sentiments of inextinguishable hostility against the states with which she is now at war, it is not easy to calculate. To the great tribunal of public opinion, some deference is due; and the manifestation of such a disposition, and the course of conduct to which it must lead, could only cause this country to be considered as the common enemy of the rest of the world. But independent of foreign powers, there are formidable objections at home against such a bold and decisive measure. Were ministers explicitly to refuse all offers of negotiation, it would open the eyes of the people to their real

situation. They would then clearly perceive, that the long unvaried track of hostility in which they are called upon to persevere, can only terminate in their ruin; and that if they escape a sudden destruction, from the rocks and precipices which they must at every step encounter, they must eventually perish from the very fatigue and difficulty of the journey. That the heavy burthens and taxations to which they submit shall never be relaxed; that the personal sacrifices which the war requires must not only be continued, but increased; that whole classes of society, the pride, and strength, and hope of the country, must quit their pacific and useful occupations, and devote themselves to a military life; and all this because ministers refuse to listen to *any proposals of pacification*, could scarcely be expected to be silently submitted to, and would indeed require a prostration of intellect upon which ministers themselves would hardly presume. A different policy is therefore necessary. The offers of reconciliation, so repeatedly and earnestly made, are not to be directly and ostensibly rejected; but our acceptance of them is to be postponed, *till we learn the sentiments of our allies*, objections are to be raised, as to *the authority of the minister by whom they are made*, or to the *irregular and hasty manner of his proceeding*; and those circum-

stances which to common apprehension are the most decisive proofs of a pacific disposition on the part of our enemy, are to be converted into additional causes of offence, and represented as evidence of *an unjustifiable suspicion of our sincerity*. Hence the country is led to believe that the continuance of the war is to be attributed to no other cause than the bad faith, prevarication, animosity, and obstinacy of the enemy. In this idea they are industriously confirmed by every art which those who delight in war and fatten upon its spoils can devise. It is to no purpose that ministers have precluded themselves and the country from the knowledge of *any proposals which our enemies are inclined to make*, by interdicting or avoiding all discussion. Their expectations and demands, although unknown, are still represented as in the highest degree unjust and exorbitant, and as requiring from us a total surrender of our honour and our interest, our commercial prosperity and our maritime rights; and even the attempt to explain to us such demands, is considered by us as only adding insult to injury. By a kind of magnetic repulsion, the nearer they approach the further we fly. The result of every attempt at pacification only renders pacification less probable. Formerly we had some assignable reasons of hostility, which, however weak and futile, served at least

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to mark the limit of our sacrifices and the bound of our labours; but these are now discarded as useless pretexts. Such, we are told, is the violence and ambition of the enemy, such his determination to be satisfied with nothing short of our entire destruction, that *we must now dismiss all ideas of peace*, and resort as our only security to a PERPETUAL WAR. We contemplate such a state of society as if it were long possible; as if in the continual fluctuation of human affairs, war alone could be eternal; as if the period must not arrive, when ONE OF THE TWO NATIONS by whom such a sentiment is avowed, MUST INCUR INEVITABLE DESTRUCTION AS A STATE, AND SUBMIT TO THE WILL OF THE OTHER!

If, in the course of the preceding pages, I have in any degree accomplished the objects which I had in view; if I have demonstrated, not only that *no satisfactory proof has as yet been given that a just, honourable, and advantageous peace is not attainable*, but that even the proposals successively made to the British Ministry for a negotiation, have either been *postponed, eluded, or perverted* to the purposes of exciting fresh hostility; if this has been done with any degree of conviction, I would now venture to ask those acknowledged friends to peace, who have been of opinion that it is not advisable for the people to express their

sentiments on that subject by addresses or petitions to the sovereign, what measures they would advise the country to take at such a juncture? At the time those opinions were first avowed, they were perhaps more defensible than at present. Rumours of a negotiation prevailed in the country, the particulars of which were not known beyond the cabinet, and it was not until the meeting of Parliament, that the public had an opportunity of forming a judgment on the subject. But now, when the attention of an hour will explain to the most indolent capacity all that ministers allow us to know of these discussions, it may reasonably be expected, that every difference of opinion amongst the friends of peace, will be effectually removed. That finding every other hope frustrated, every other prospect of reconciliation closed, every doubt as to the intention of Ministers dispelled, the dispassionate part of the community will resort to the only constitutional mode in their power, and express their sentiments to their sovereign, in those loyal and dutiful terms which he will not refuse to hear. Is it asserted as an objection to these measures, that it would be impolitic to let our enemies know the real situation of the country? I scruple not to aver, that whatever that situation may be, it is more injurious to this country to make such an assertion than it is

openly to acknowledge the evil. Are we then to tell our enemies, in express terms, that our situation is such that we must labour to conceal it from them? That we have already arrived at such a state of disease, that we dare not probe the wound? By the constitution of these realms, it is the right of the people to petition their Sovereign, and if that right is not to be exercised on an emergency like the present, when is it likely to be of any use? But the paramount consideration on this, as on all similar subjects, is, that it is always desirable that the truth should be known, and that all endeavours to conceal it are only the result of that narrow policy, which, in attempting to impose upon others, imposes only on itself. That these faithful representations of the public mind will contain any sentiments derogatory to the honour of the crown, or the invincible spirit of the people, it would be a libel upon the country to suppose. The purport of them is not, as has been falsely and absurdly represented, that Great Britain should humiliate herself to her enemies, and should stain her honour and compromise her interests by the acceptance of any terms which might be unworthy of a great and powerful nation. Their object is to express the desire of the petitioners that an opening may still be left for negotiation; that any opportunities that may in future present

themselves of entering upon pacific discussions, and ascertaining the terms upon which peace may be concluded; may not, like those which have already occurred, be neglected, or perverted to other purposes ; and that if such terms be found consistent with the dignity of the British Sovereign, and the interests of his people, if they should be calculated to confirm to us our possessions, to establish our just rights, to afford a wide scope for national exertion, to remove as much as possible the causes of future warfare, and finally to satisfy that *sense* of national honour which is no less essential to the true interests than to the character of the country, that then, and then only, such terms of pacification should be acceded to.

Nor let it be supposed that these loyal manifestations of the state of the country and of the feelings of the people, will for one moment relax or interfere with that patriotic spirit, and that unanimity of action, which are requisite for the defence of the country and the vigorous prosecution of the war. The people well know that this is a duty which is paramount to all other considerations ; that it admits of no qualifications ; is affected by no misconduct of ministers ; and ceases but with life itself. Wretched indeed would be our condition, if the high and

honourable performance of this indispensable duty were not perfectly consistent with that freedom of opinion on all political subjects, and particularly on the objects and consequences of war, and on the measures of ministers, which by our birth-right as Britons we enjoy ; and they who presumptuously stigmatize the free exercise of this inestimable privilege with the mark of disloyalty or disaffection, are not only unworthy of such a privilege, but are the real promoters of that disunion which they affect to deprecate, and would, if they could succeed in their efforts to silence the free expression of the public mind, deprive the friends and defenders of their country, of all that renders it worth veneration and worth defence.

To enter upon pacific discussions without a real desire of bringing them to a successful termination, can however be of no avail. We have already seen with what ease the offers even for opening a negotiation may be eluded ; and we cannot doubt that if there be not a sincere and mutual desire of reconciliation, innumerable circumstances may occur in the course of any negotiation, which may afford a plausible pretext for defeating the object which the parties profess to have in view. To the people at large it is indifferent to what administration they may

be indebted for the restoration of tranquillity, but it must be acknowledged that his Majesty's present Ministers have shewn no substantial indications that they are actuated by any spirit of conciliation, and that the declarations of their pacific intentions have been strongly contrasted by their conduct, as often as any opportunity has occurred of putting them to the test. On the other hand, the tendency of their councils to enlarge the theatre and extend the ravages of war, seems no less manifest than their aversion to peace. At the time when they came into power, the difficulties and dangers under which this country laboured from her powerful adversaries, were deeply felt and generally acknowledged; but during the short period of their administration, those difficulties have been increased, and those adversaries have been more than doubled, both in number and in strength. Nations which were then firmly united with us in a common cause, have been alienated, and converted into enemies; those which before were neutral, have, by imprudent, unjust, and violent measures, been thrown into the arms of France; and, as if it were not sufficient to have exasperated all Europe against us, we have by our rash and inconsiderate proceedings, and particularly by the impolitic tenor of the late Orders in Council, given rise to a spirit of animosity be-

tween this country and America, the consequences of which cannot fail to be highly injurious and dangerous to both. That the alienation of our continental allies may, in a great degree, be attributed to the extraordinary successes of Bonaparte, may readily be admitted; but the final extinction of all friendly intercourse, and the present hostility between this country and the principal Northern Powers, is the unhappy result of our own misconduct and violence; and even those successes which have overthrown every continental barrier against the ambition of Bonaparte, may fairly be attributed to the manifest indisposition and neglect, on the part of the British Ministry, to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the offer of Austria, in the month of April, 1807, for terminating hostilities, and preventing the further ravages of war.

How far it is probable that after the repeated overtures for negotiation made, either directly or indirectly to this country by the present Ruler of France, he may be inclined to renew such an application it is difficult to say. Having so frequently declared in the face of Europe his willingness to enter upon a negotiation, and having solicited the mediation of other powers for that purpose, it is possible that he may ex-

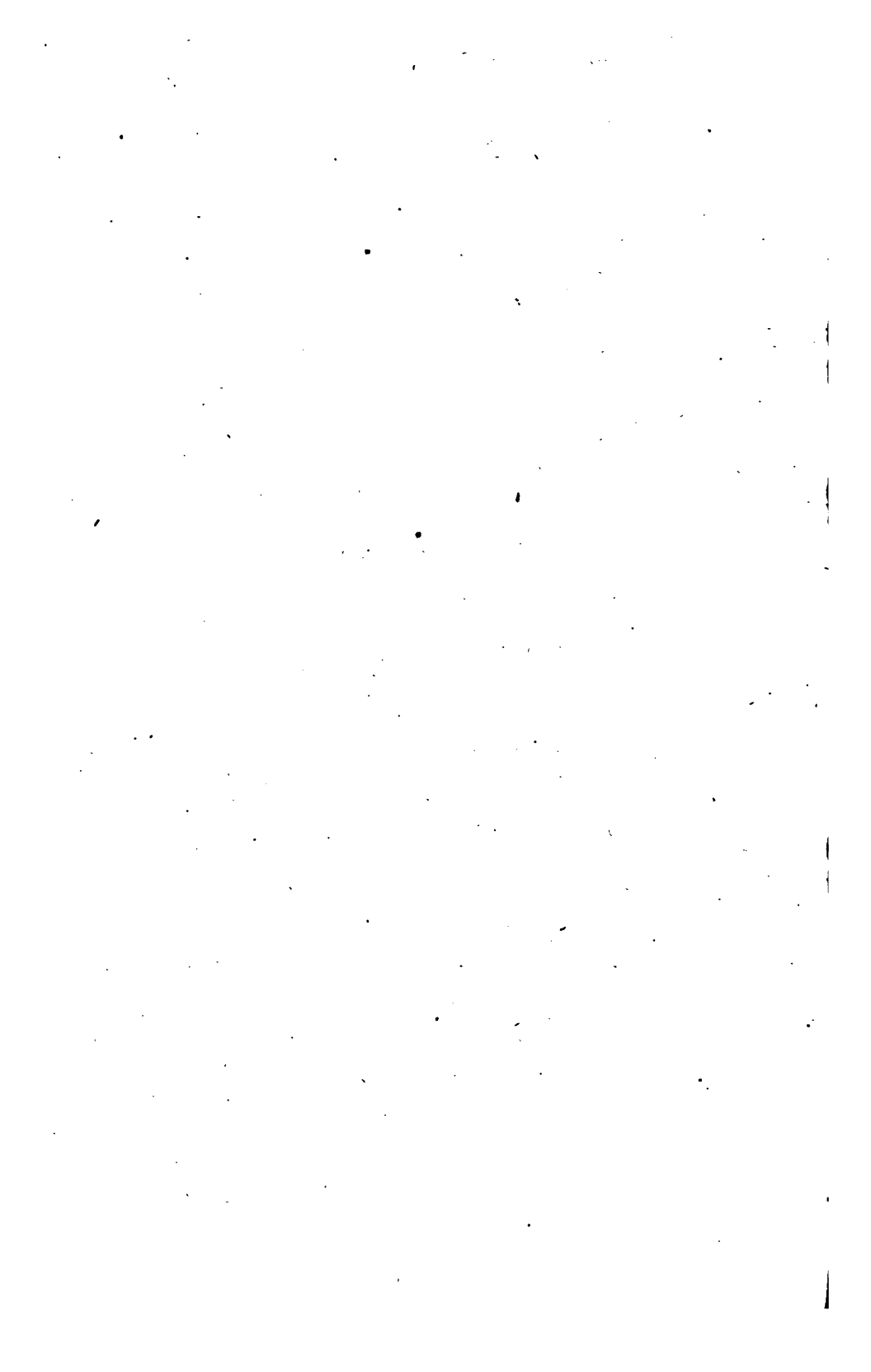
pect that the next offer should originate with us. Nor can it be contended that such a manifestation can, under due precautions, be derogatory to the honour of any country; for if such an idea were universally to prevail, all wars must be interminable. On the contrary, the frequent rejection of the propositions made to us, now calls upon us to be the first to make a pacific advance. In the eyes of the rest of the world, which has so long suffered under the calamities of war, such a measure, instead of being degrading, would appear highly honourable to this country, and one of the *leading members of His Majesty's* present administration, has asserted in specific terms, "that *at any time when negotiation is desirable*, he cannot conceive that any delicacy as "to which party should make the proposal "ought to stand in the way."* It is easy, however, to foresee, that against any proceeding of this nature, it will be loudly asserted, that *this is not the time for pacific overtures*; an observation which the supporters of the war system have been equally ready to make, ever since its commencement, whenever such overtures have been proposed. According to their ideas the most improper time to enter on negotiations, is

* Mr. Ganning's speech on the negotiation with France in 1806.

always that in which they appear to be the most loudly called for by the country, and the most strongly recommended by every consideration of expediency, of propriety, and of interest. In opposition, however, to these sentiments, it may with great confidence be observed, that the present is, *of all others*, the most proper time to enter upon pacific discussions. To say nothing of the operation of the war, as it affects the condition of different classes of our fellow subjects, we cannot fail to observe that a new scene is now opening upon us. An essential change has taken place in the general aspect and affairs of Europe. We now for the first time find ourselves engaged in a war without an ally who can render us the least assistance, or rather, who will not be an additional incumbrance and expense to us; and have to enter upon an untried contest, perfectly novel to the history of this country, which has long been accustomed to carry on its warfare rather by the means of its allies than by its own physical resources and military strength. Besides our European foes, it seems not improbable that a short time may give us another beyond the Atlantic; and with the increase of our enemies we may reasonably apprehend the diminution of our trade, and the defalcation of our public revenue. This then seems of all others to be the period at which we ought to pause. Whether or not we are to

plunge into such a new and unexampled contest, may yet, perhaps, rest in some degree on our own decision; and certainly a more awful subject was never proposed to the deliberation of any country.—That any negotiation which might be opened would terminate in the establishment of peace cannot indeed be positively asserted; but at all events it would enable us to ascertain in some degree the views of the enemy; and would tend either to realize, or to remove, those ideas so generally entertained in this country of the intentions of Bonaparte to *infringe upon its honour, its interests, or its rights*. If these apprehensions should be dissipated by any proposals which he might make, the way to pacification would then be prepared; if, on the contrary, they should be confirmed, every difference of opinion in this country, as to the expediency or practicability of peace, would be effectually removed; and every possible privation would not only be cheerfully submitted to, but the temporary calamities incident to any portion of our fellow subjects, who may be more particularly liable to suffer from the effects of long protracted hostilities, or by the loss of commercial intercourse, would doubtless be alleviated by the liberality of the more wealthy part of the community, or the timely aid of the nation at large. If, however, we should be compelled by the ambitious

views and unreasonable demands of our adversary to continue the war, let our efforts be directed by magnanimity and public spirit, supported by prudence and economy, and above all, let us endeavour to reconcile the world to our cause by conducting ourselves with integrity, with strict adherence to good faith, and with inviolable justice. It is by such means, and by such means only, that we can hope to render any war either popular or successful. To stain the honour, to degrade the character, and to violate the good faith of the nation ; to attempt either to secure ourselves, or to annoy our enemies, by acts of cruelty, of treachery, and of injustice, unauthorized by the general laws of society, and the practice of civilized states, is to acknowledge that we can no longer rely on the virtue, energy, and courage, which have hitherto distinguished and preserved this country through all her difficulties ; it is to render ourselves the just objects of resentment, of dread, and of abhorrence, to the rest of the world, and cannot fail to accelerate that ruin which the debasement of public spirit, and of private virtue, must inevitably produce.



BRIEF OBSERVATIONS

ON THE
ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY,

PROPOSED BY

EARL GREY
IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

19TH JUNE 1810.

BY WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1810,
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BRIEF OBSERVATIONS, &c.

ON the 13th of June, 1810, Earl Grey moved in the House of Lords, an address to his Majesty, in which he proposed—

“ To state to His Majesty, that we cannot doubt His
“ Majesty’s readiness to embrace the first opportunity of
“ concluding a peace on just and reasonable terms; *but,*
“ that looking to the nature of the contest in which we
“ are engaged; to *the power of France, now unhappily*
“ *established over the greater part of Europe;* and to
“ *the spirit and character of the government of that*
“ *country;* we are convinced that this event, so anxiously
“ desired by His Majesty and his loyal people, *will be*
“ *best promoted,* by proving to the world, that while
“ His Majesty is actuated by the most just and mo-
“ derate views, we possess the means of *permanently*
“ *supporting the honour and independence of our coun-*
“ *try,* against every species of attack by which the
“ enemy may hope to assail them.

“ That, for this purpose, it is indispensably necessary,
“ that His Majesty’s Government should henceforth
“ adopt a wise and systematic policy, regulated not only
“ by a just estimate of our present difficulties, but by a
“ prudent foresight of the probable exigencies of a *pro-*
“ *tracted warfare.*”

An amendment was moved by Lord Stanhope, purporting, that the House would pledge themselves to maintain the law of the land, and to support the liberties of the people, and the trial by jury; which was supported by the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Suffolk, and Lord Erskine, —but was negatived; upon which those noblemen immediately left the House. The motion for the address was then proposed, and negatived by a majority of 134 Peers, against 72.

Thus then it appears, that an address, purporting, in substance, to be a recommendation to His Majesty to continue the present war, was supported by 72 Peers in opposition to Administration, and was negatived by 134 Peers who are friendly to administration.

It will not, however, be supposed, that the difference of opinion between their lordships arose on the passages now quoted. That the present administration are at least as ready to carry on the war as their political opponents, cannot be doubted; and they must have perceived with great satisfaction, that on this important subject, there is now *no opposition of party*, but that the expediency of continuing the war is generally and unequivocally acknowledged.

That the tendency of the proposed address is to encourage a continuance of the war, is too apparent to admit of a doubt. It is true, we there read of "His Majesty's readiness to conclude a peace on just and reasonable terms," and of "His Majesty's just and moderate views;" but its substantial purport is evident and decisive. What can be meant by our "proving to the world that we possess the means of permanently supporting the honour and independence of our country," but a continuance of the war? By what means are we told that peace will be best promoted?—By a continuation of the war. Why is His Majesty's acknowledged desire of peace opposed by the objective particle *but*, if it be not because we are to continue the war? or why are we, at this prolonged period of hostility, so pointedly called upon to estimate our resources, but on account of the exigencies of a *protracted warfare*?

If, however, any doubts could remain as to the purport of the proposed address, they would be speedily removed by adverting to the arguments used by the noble lord in its support. From these we learn,—and not without a considerable portion both of surprise and concern, that his lordship is now of opinion that "we are reduced to the dilemma, either that the

" attempt on our part to open the door to a
 " negotiation, *would not conduce to the attainment*
 " *of our object*; or, that if that object was attain-
 " able, *it would be unaccompanied with those es-*
 " *sential securities which alone could render it*
 " *really valuable.*"——" That when we consider
 " that he who now sits *exulting over the spoils*
 " *of prostrate Europe*, is checked in his hopes
 " of universal dominion, and retarded in his pro-
 " gress to a more extended despotism, by the
 " power, resistance, and resources of this coun-
 " try alone, it is impossible not to believe him
 " impelled by all those influences which sway
 " the human heart, to look to the overthrow and
 " destruction of Great Britain, as his fixed, his
 " most desirable object; as that in which all his
 " passions are concentrated, and to which all his
 " designs are directed. This object is the sole
 " aim of his policy, WHETHER IN WAR OR IN
 " PEACE. To the latter, whenever our enemy
 " may incline to make it, we must only look as to
 " A PERIOD DURING WHICH HE MAY WITH
 " MORE SECURITY PURSUE HIS PLANS A-
 " GAINST THE FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE,
 " AND EXISTENCE OF THIS COUNTRY."*——

* I am fully sensible of the impropriety of laying too great
 a stress on particular expressions, reported from an extempo-
 raneous speech; but the general tenor of the whole cannot be

From these and other expressions in the speech of Lord Grey, it may be concluded, that however desirous he may be of the restoration of peace, he conceives that under the present circumstances of Europe, it cannot be obtained without the imminent risk of greater evils than we already sustain, and that we have now no alternative but to continue the war. Nor can it be denied, that similar opinions are very generally diffused through the country at large, and have induced many of those who were formerly adverse to the war, and whose abilities and influence might greatly have contributed to a pacification, to arrange themselves in the ranks of those whom they formerly opposed, and to vindicate the necessity of perpetual or indefinite hostility.

The question between the advocates of the war, and the friends of peace, is now fairly at issue. On the facts and circumstances on which their respective opinions are founded, they are perfectly agreed. The immense accession of power which our enemy has acquired in the

misunderstood. The extracts here given are from the report as taken in short-hand by Mr. Power, and published by Ridgeway, which on being compared with those given in the papers of the day, appears not substantially to differ, as far as relates to this subject.

course of the war, and the increasing difficulty of providing our own resources, are subjects not less expatiated upon by the promoters of the war, than by those who wish for its termination; but on this occasion, as on many others, from the same premises different persons have drawn different results. Those who are favourable to the continuance of the war, are of opinion that the successes of Bonaparte have given him so decided a superiority over us, that there can be no safety, *either in peace or war*, whilst he retains his power; and that it is more advisable to devote the remainder of our strength to the possibility of overturning him, than to consent to a reconciliation on any terms that can be proposed. Undoubtedly *if that crisis be now arrived*; if our enemies be so far aggrandized, and this country so far reduced by the present contest, that a pacification can only seal our destiny, and consign us over to slavery, dishonour, and contempt, it would be worse than folly, it would be the most detestable wickedness, not to expend the last drop of our blood rather than submit to such a disgrace. Fortunately, however, *for us all, this alarming period is not yet arrived*; and it is precisely to prevent its arrival, that these considerations are offered to the public mind. That the first promoters and subsequent conductors of the war have done much to bring on such a crisis, must be admitted; but there are in this

country powers of resistance which no misconduct of ministers can impair ; energies which no concurrence of exterior circumstances can destroy ; which depend not on the prosperity, or the disorder, of financial arrangements, but on the limbs and strength, on the hearts and minds of a people determined to be free. Whilst, therefore, the friends of peace perceive, in its fullest extent, the additional power acquired by our enemy in the course of the war, they by no means admit that his superiority is so great and so decisive, as to render the establishment of peace, upon safe and honourable terms, an event beyond all just and reasonable expectation. What may be the consequence, *if the same steps which have hitherto been pursued, should be persevered in to a further extent*, they cannot indeed foresee ; but they entertain not a doubt that, *under the present circumstances*, a reconciliation might be effected, which should not only be consistent with the honour and interests of this country, but should place her beyond the apprehension of danger from any power on earth. In looking to the strength and resources of France, they are not so appalled as to be forgetful of their own. If it be true, that France has obtained the ascendancy over continental Europe, it is equally true, that on the ocean this country is unrivalled. If the revenues of France, extracted from her extended population be great, those of this coun-

try, which are supported not only by an active and industrious people, but by an inexhaustible foreign trade, are also great, and of a nature at least equally permanent. *If* a season of peace would give facilities to the further power and aggrandizement of France, it would afford them in a much greater degree to this country, which, from the excellence of her manufactures, the extent of her mercantile capital, and the incalculable superiority of her fleets, is ready to enter on that career of national prosperity for which France is yet unprepared. Does it then follow, as an inevitable consequence, that because we are unable to overthrow the power of France, we are incompetent to defend ourselves from any attack which France may think proper to direct against us? or shall we be so much alarmed at our present circumstances, as to suppose there is no safety but in desperation?

Nor must it be understood that the depressing representations made respecting the condition and resources of this country, are to be admitted in an unqualified and unlimited sense. It is only when we contemplate the prosecution of the war, that we can be said to feel the insufficiency of our resources, or the difficulties of our situation. It is the immense expenditure of our military and naval establishments—the preparation of formidable and expensive expe-

ditions—the profuse and wanton manner in which the wealth of the nation is unavoidably expended and misapplied during a state of warfare, that occasion this disproportion between our wants and our supplies. Could we, for a moment, allow ourselves to suppose, that this enormous expenditure could, with safety to ourselves, be wholly, or even in part avoided, our prospects would suddenly change, and we should discover that the difficulties by which we were surrounded were not of an absolute and unalterable nature, but were merely the result of a course of conduct which we had prescribed to ourselves, and were determined at all events to pursue;—To every object of our own protection—to every domestic improvement, and even to the liquidation of our immense encumbrances, the revenues of the country are abundantly sufficient. **WE ARE STRONG FOR PEACE, BUT WEAK FOR WAR. COMPETENT TO DEFEND OURSELVES FROM EVERY ATTACK THAT CAN BE MADE AGAINST US; BUT INCOMPETENT TO CHANGE THE DESTINY OF EUROPE, OR TO DRAG ITS PRESENT RULER FROM HIS IMPERIAL HEIGHT.** To suppose, therefore, that we are reduced to such a state of debility by the war, as to be rendered incapable of defending ourselves, unless we can accomplish the destruction of our enemies, is a presumption as

remote from the truth, as it ought to be from the apprehension of every friend to his country.

What, then, may we be allowed to ask, are the real and solid objections to a pacification? Is there any clear and definite object for which we are now to continue the war? are we still to attempt *the restoration of the house of Bourbon?* or to insist upon *indemnity for the past, and security for the future?* Are apprehensions still entertained that, in case of a peace, our countrymen will throng in crowds to Paris, and bring back with them those pernicious principles of licentious liberty, which for so many years were our aversion and our dread? Amidst all our calamities, we have at least lived to see that once fertile pretext for animosity and bloodshed exploded. The *pestilential nuisance*, which so imminently threatened our safety, is effectually abated; the *filthy night-cellar*, full only of *thieves, murderers, and house-breakers*, is cleansed; the *infamous brothel*, in the neighbourhood of which no decent person could think of living, is purified;* and in the place of these, we find as regular an edifice, as well barred, bolted, and secured, and inhabited by persons who conduct themselves in as orderly a manner, and with as much gravity and solemnity, as any in Europe,

* See Mr. Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace.

But if these ancient causes of dissension be removed, they have been replaced by others, whose influence on the community appears to be still more extensive; till at length, THE VERY SITUATION INTO WHICH WE ARE BROUGHT BY THE WAR, IS ALLEDGED AS THE MOST POWERFUL REASON FOR ITS CONTINUANCE.

Let us, however, endeavour to banish our apprehensions so far as to ask, *what in all human probability is the danger we should incur by a peace with France.*—The answer is already given by Lord Grey. It is “THAT INVASION, “*of which neither the solemn obligations of treaties, nor the servile dependance of tributary vassalage, can prevent the attempt.*” I shall not stay to inquire upon what grounds his lordship has thought proper to suppose even *the possibility* of this country existing in a state of *tributary vassalage* to France, and flatter myself that in this instance, there must be some inaccuracy in the report of his speech; but with respect to our reliance on the faith of a treaty with our enemies, his lordship cannot but know, that it is only on the broad principle of mutual interest, and mutual security, that such treaties are, or ought to be formed—For the performance of them we rely, not on the faith of our enemy, but on our own strength; not on his voluntary performance of them, but on our ability to enforce them; not on his

forbearance and moderation, but on our own vigilance and promptitude. To assent to any treaty which would disqualify us from these measures, and where we had to trust merely to the assurances and promises of our adversaries, would be to betray the cause of our country.

Is it then possible to suppose, that under the guarantee of such a treaty, where the deviation from it by one party would give to the other the right of immediate interference, and justify a renewal of hostilities, preparations could be made by France, which could enable her, in a season of peace, and during the confidence of amity, to attempt the invasion of this country? Granting to Lord Grey, that it is the *sole object of the French Ruler, whether in peace or war*, to accomplish the subjugation of these realms, are we, in consequence of a pacification, to sit tranquilly by, and see preparations made, which according to all reasonable conjecture, can have no other object in view than our ultimate destruction? Is his Lordship to be informed, that in all periods and by every rule of international law, the hostile preparations of a neighbouring state justify inquiries and precautions on the part of others, and that the present case differs in no respect from those which have before occurred, and must always occur, as long as independent nations have an existence. In

the relative situation of Great Britain and France, this has been recently exemplified. Among the causes for a renewal of hostilities assigned by his Majesty's Ministers in the year 1803, it was alledged that France was making preparations in the ports of Holland for an invasion of this country, and this assertion, sanctioned by the highest authority, produced upon the people at large that alarm and abhorrence which the treacherous nature of such conduct could not fail to inspire, and contributed in an eminent degree, not only to reconcile them to fresh sacrifices, but to render them eager for the prosecution of the war. Scarcely, however, had hostilities begun, when it was discovered that this circumstance, which, if it had really existed, was a just and warrantable ground of war, was founded in error or misrepresentation, and that during a period of two years, not one step had been taken by our enemies, although they were then under the authority of the very man who is still at the head of their government, to make preparations for that invasion which it seems we so greatly dread; but what is still more to our present purpose, is to observe, that in the denial given by France, in the face of Europe, to this charge, and which has been considered even in this country as a complete refutation, it was explicitly and in

express terms admitted, that if such charge had been well founded, it would have been a sufficient cause for the renewal of hostilities. Can it then be presumed, that in case of a treaty with France, we are to resign ourselves to whatever fate she may prepare for us? Are we to deliver ourselves up, bound hand and foot, into the power of our enemy? or are we not, on the contrary, to conduct ourselves with that regard to our safety and independence which has hitherto been found adequate to our preservation both in peace and war?

That there should be a necessity, in the present times, to enforce by arguments, truths which are in themselves evident, is really melancholy; but such is the dread of the power of France that has pervaded every rank and description of persons in this country, that they dare no longer trust, either to the dictates of their own reason, or to the evidence of their senses. Let us, however, suppose, in compliment to their apprehensions, that on some dark winter's night, during the interval of a treacherous peace, a naval force should be provided by our enemies, which at break of day should land a numerous army on our own shores—Is there a British head or a British heart, that in contemplating the achievements of our countrymen in Egypt, in

Italy, in Spain, in every part of the globe in which they have been placed in hostile array against the enemy, could feel a doubt of the result? but if such have been their courage and success in distant lands, what would be their efforts on their own shores, against an enemy whose power they have defied, whose superiority they scorn, and whose treachery they would detest? If under the supposition of an event, the occurrence of which defies probability, and outrages common sense—the *invasion of England by France in a time of profound peace*—we should for one moment despair of making an effectual resistance, or of inflicting upon our invaders a deserved and speedy vengeance, we are already ripe for the yoke, and ought to submit, without a murmur, to any fate that may await us.

Fear has, however, no bounds, and national fears act as an epidemic. It may therefore, perhaps, be said, that although no avowed preparations may, during a state of peace, be made by France for the destruction of this country, yet that such a state will afford our enemies an opportunity of building a navy in the various ports now under their authority, to be ready for effecting their purpose in case of a rupture, the causes of which are always in the power of either party. This, however is, in fact, only a recurrence to the former argument, and consequently admits of a

similar reply. Ships cannot be built; and navies formed, in secret; and if such preparations were made, beyond the extent which the exigencies of a country in a state of peace might require, they would first become the proper object of remonstrance, and, for want of explanation, of hostile interference, upon the admitted principle before stated; but, independent of this, it may justly be observed, that the period of peace is not the time in which a navy can be formed. It is not hulks, and ropes, and canvas alone that constitute a navy; in order to render it complete and formidable, skilful commanders and hardy and experienced seamen are required, and these can only be obtained by a long course of hostile discipline. That France should ever arrive at such a degree of maritime power as to become formidable to this country, there is but one chance, and that is, by our continuance of the present war. In the early periods of her revolution, France was not less inferior to her numerous adversaries in military strength, resources, and experience, than she is now in naval power to this country; yet, being driven on by her enemies, either to submission or resistance, she has, amidst dangers and calamities, internal dissension and external war, fought her way through derision, defeat, and disgrace, not only to victory and independence, but to an unexampled degree of military power and glory. In admitting,

therefore, with Lord Grey, that our enemy *now holds at his disposal the resources of all those maritime powers, who, in former times, have even disputed with ourselves the empire of the seas*, let us not wantonly and unnecessarily compel him, for his own defence, to call those powers into action. After having united with our allies to render him great by land, let us now at least take care that we do not render him great by sea. At present his navies are growing in the woods, and his seamen tilling the fields, or filling the ranks of his armies. Let us be cautious how we compel them to appear in more formidable situations. Men act not without motives; and without our hostility, our adversary can have no adequate reason for engaging in the task of forming a naval establishment that may rival that of this country. In the present situation of the globe, he is already superior to every other naval power, and can therefore entertain no fear but from ourselves. Even our maritime strength is to him no legitimate object of envy. Ships, colonies, and commerce, which are to us of indispensable necessity, are to him only of secondary importance. The attempt to attain them would only involve him in new contests which it is his true interest to avoid; and notwithstanding his memorable language respecting them, which produced such a sensation in this country, there is little probability of his directing his efforts to this purpose; otherwise,

he would not in the negotiations of 1806, have proposed to divest France of so important a portion of her colonial possessions, in both the East and West Indies. It is therefore apparent, that if France ever become a great naval power, England must not only compel her to the necessity of it, but must undertake to be her instructor; and that for making an attempt which must necessarily employ so large a proportion of her resources, she can have no motive but the expectation of terminating a war, the continuance of which *cannot fail*, from the nature and extent of our strength, to be the perpetual object of her vigilance and her apprehension.

Dismissing, however, the vague and chimerical fears which we have hitherto combated, it may still be contended that France, although unable to reduce this country to the condition of a dependant state, may yet, during a season of tranquillity, interrupt her progress and encroach upon her prosperity; and that it is therefore our interest, at all events, and by every possible exertion, to diminish that power which we shall otherwise have perpetual reason to dread. In reply to this, it might be observed, that the Creator of the universe has not so disposed his works, that the prosperity or aggrandizement of one state must necessarily imply the debasement or misfortune of another; and that the two great

communities of Great Britain and France are not less calculated to assist each other in the cause of national honour and felicity, than they are to oppose each other by arms and violence. It must, however, unhappily be admitted, that so fortunate a result must be the offspring of more generous sentiments, and more enlightened views, than are at present to be expected from the recent conduct of either of these two powerful countries ; and that until such an event takes place, it will be incumbent upon us, by every fair and justifiable effort, to maintain ourselves upon an equality, at least, with our rival state ; but it would be no less criminal than it would be absurd, to suppose that the mere superiority of one state is a sufficient ground for the permanent hostility of another. In the community of nations, as in that of individuals, Providence has determined that there shall be degrees of pre-eminence ; and it is no more justifiable, to attack a nation by war, on account only of its superior strength or greatness, than it would be in private life to assassinate every person of higher rank than ourselves. It is only by industry, by integrity, by knowledge, by the encouragement of enlarged and virtuous sentiments, by the cultivation of the human mind in every department of science and of art, that we ought to contend for superiority over others. It is by such contests only that the human race

can be effectually improved, and it is these alone that counteract the calamities which the brutal struggles of physical strength have hitherto inflicted upon mankind.

These sentiments are given to the winds. Jealousy will continue to exasperate, and war to decide; the contests of rival states. We will therefore suppose, that it is, in itself, highly expedient for this country to humiliate the pride and diminish the power of France. Yet we must at the same time be permitted to doubt, whether so desirable an event is likely to be obtained by a further prosecution of the war. To what is the present aggrandizement of France, so amply dwelt upon by Lord Grey, to be attributed? or why have we to lament the more formidable position which she has now assumed with respect to the rest of Europe? Is it because we made an unadvised and imprudent peace with her, and thereby gave her an opportunity of taking measures for her present aggrandizement? Or have we not, on the contrary, exerted all our efforts to oppose her in every part of the globe where there was any prospect of success? Had his lordship been fortunate enough to have restored peace to Europe in 1806, what would probably have been the situation of France at this moment? Is it certain, or is it even probable, that Austria would again have been com-

pelled to bite the dust, and Prussia have been destroyed as an independent state? Is it likely that Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, would have been found at this time in strict alliance with France? Is it even certain, that if Bonaparte had not found an inflexible enemy in this country, against whom he wished to obtain new resources and new points of attack, he would have attempted the subjugation of Spain and Portugal? would he at this moment have found himself the undisputed dictator of the Continent of Europe; or would a daughter of the house of Austria have been the partner of his throne? It is then in all probability because a reconciliation with France *did not take place*, that we have now to regret the extended authority of our enemy, and the more formidable attitude which he has assumed with respect to what remains of the independence of Europe. What might have been the present posture of affairs in case of such a pacification, cannot indeed be precisely determined; but we may with confidence assert, that no circumstances could have occurred which could have contributed to the aggrandizement of the French ruler, in any degree to be compared with what has actually taken place. It is indeed true, that from the origin of the present contest, every effort that has been made to limit the dominion and repress the power of France, has tended only to increase them; yet the period in which this extraordi-

nary accession has taken place, is *precisely that between the negotiations in 1806, and the present time.* Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, and Portugal, with a very considerable portion of Germany and Italy, might have been rescued from the authority, or secured from the influence of the enemy. Even Hanover might yet have been under the dominion of the house of Brunswick; and the French emperor, although greatly aggrandized by the folly, the pertinacity, and the weakness of former ministers of this country, would have found a termination, if not of his ambition, at least of the means of gratifying it, in the tranquillity of a general peace.

Reflections of this nature may be supposed to have been as likely to occur to Lord Grey, as to any man now living. He must have recollected what the relative situation of France and of this country was in 1806, and he cannot but be sensible, that the astonishing difference between that and the present, has been occasioned, not by a peace, but by a continuation of the war; which, whilst it has increased the resources and extended the dominions of France, has greatly diminished the power and the influence of this country, has actually destroyed a great proportion of her military, and has reduced her to a situation, *not only compara-*

tively, but *positively lower than she was at the time such pacification was proposed.* Yet with the full view of all these circumstances, his lordship stands forward to say, that *because the power of France is unhappily established over the greater part of Europe, we must continue the war!* To what are we to attribute the origin of French aggrandizement, but to the attack of the allied sovereigns of Europe upon the then almost defenceless territory of France? To what is every accession that she has made to be in fact imputed, but to a perseverance in the same hostile measures? Yet it must be confessed, that at times, just and reasonable hopes might have been entertained, that the power of the states confederated against her would prove successful, and be found sufficient—if not to conquer France, at least to keep her within her own limits; but notwithstanding these warlike powers, arrayed against her on every part of her frontiers, she has broken through the iron boundary, and diffused herself, like an ungovernable torrent, on every side. Upon what grounds is it then to be argued, that the subjugation of France, which, when she was in a state of disorder and debility, could not be effected by the united efforts of Europe, should now, when she has acquired an accession of power beyond all that could have been conjectured, be accomplished by the sole efforts of this country, not only without the aid

of, but in opposition to those very powers, in alliance with whom we commenced the war? To what strange perversity are we to attribute the conduct of our statesmen, who in proportion as the attainment of the object becomes more impracticable, and the attempt more dangerous, strengthen and confirm themselves in their determination to pursue it; who after having been repeatedly foiled in the attempt to conquer France by superiority of numbers, now expect to accomplish it with an inferiority so remarkable as to render all comparison ridiculous; who instead of learning caution from their own disappointments and their own weakness, feel only exasperation at the power of the enemy; who indulge their wishes, rather than their expectations, and in the eagerness of their desires to humiliate that foe whom they have so eminently contributed to raise, forget that the same causes will continue to produce the same effects; and who have flattered their own passions and prejudices to such a degree, as even to stigmatize as IRRATIONAL OR INSANE all those who would oppose their destructive career.*

* In the debate on this subject in the House of Lords, the Earl of Liverpool is said to have observed in his reply to Lord Grey, that "whatever difference of opinion *formerly* existed on the subject of the war, *he believed, amongst all* SOBER, RATIONAL men, *but little contrariety of sentiment* remained."

In considering Lord Grey as an advocate for the continuance of the war, I am well aware of the difference of opinion that still exists between him and the present administration: as to the mode in which such war ought to be conducted. On the ruin and disgrace which must inevitably attend its further prosecution upon the principles avowed, and by the measures adopted by them, his Lordship has dwelt with peculiar emphasis. In a forcible and solemn appeal to Lord Liverpool, he requests him to acquaint their Lordships, "whether after having made
 " the experiment, he finds his progress accelerated towards a successful termination of the
 " war. Whether that object has been advanced
 " by his expeditions so unwisely planned, and so
 " shamefully conducted, so totally defective in
 " every thing with respect to time, place, and
 " circumstance, that it was absolutely impossible
 " that they could lead to any other result than
 " has attended them; a result which this country
 " is at this moment bewailing and weeping in tears
 " and blood." To which Lord Grey further adds, " Had his Majesty's ministers given to the
 " state of Europe that consideration, which a
 " sound and salutary policy would have recommended, had they been affected by its almost
 " total subjection, it was impossible they should
 " not be convinced that all the probabilities of
 " success were in contradiction to the course they

ventured to pursue. *"They must have been struck with the folly and ruin of embarking in military operations against France, at a time when there was no power in existence to give them an effectual co-operation."*

From this, and similar passages in the speech of Lord Grey, we discover, that although he concurs with the present administration in the expediency of continuing the war, he differs with them as to the manner in which it ought to be conducted. It is true, he has not particularized the method which he would himself recommend for that purpose; but the general tenor of his observations enables us to conjecture, with sufficient certainty, what that method would be. From these we find, that under his direction the contest would be carried on, rather upon a defensive, than an offensive system. That expensive undertakings and ruinous expeditions would be avoided; but that we should maintain our fleets and armies in full strength, principally for our own defence; although prepared at the same time to take advantage of any circumstances that might, in the course of events, appear to be favourable to our interests; and that finally, we should husband our resources in such a manner, as to enable us to carry on this protracted warfare to an indefinite extent.—If, then, such

be the plan which Lord Grey would recommend to the adoption of this country ; and if it be not, I am wholly at a loss to conceive in what he differs from His Majesty's present Ministers ; let us for a moment inquire into the advantages likely to be derived from it, and what would be its probable result. We are told by Lord Grey, *that we are to depend upon ourselves and ourselves alone* ; consequently the immense advances with which we have been accustomed to subsidize foreign countries, would no longer be found necessary ; or rather, as he justly remarks, *the time is now arrived, when there is no power in existence to co-operate with us*, or to accept the offers of our pecuniary assistance.— Again, we are given to understand from the tenor of his Lordship's argument, that all wasteful and expensive armaments, all hazardous and destructive expeditions, would be avoided, from which we are to suppose, that a very considerable retrenchment would be made in our expenditure. After all, however, it may be doubted, even if a war could be conducted upon the principles laid down by Lord Grey, whether any retrenchments that could be made during a state of avowed hostility, would afford the country any effectual relief. To admit of the slightest reduction, either in our military or naval strength, would be impossible.—On the contrary, whilst

our enemy would be compelled to strain every effort to acquire a superiority of force, we should find it necessary to increase, rather than to diminish our preparations, so as to be ready to repel any attempt that he might make against us.—From the commencement of the present contest, in 1793, the annual expenditure of this country, as stated by Lord Grey, has increased from sixteen to eighty-five millions; yet, when the very interest of our permanent debt now greatly exceeds the whole amount of the annual public expenditure at the commencement of the contest, we are called upon to *husband our resources*, in order to be enabled to continue the war. Can, then, any thinking person flatter himself that this rapid increase of expenditure, which continually adds to the principal of our debt, and thereby, from the natural effect of taxation on the prices of every article of consumption, increases also our contingent annual expenditure, be stayed in its career during the continuance of the war? Even if that war were now terminated, and a peace establishment were immediately to take place, six or seven millions of permanent taxes, as we are informed by Lord Grey, would be required in addition to our present burthens. Is it then possible to conceive that under such circumstances, even if we could modify hostilities at our own pleasure,

we could restrain our expenditure within its present limits, *so as not to fear a failure in resources?* Or is it not, on the contrary, easy to foresee, that if, as his Lordship admits, "*taxation has arrived at a height beyond which it cannot well be carried—that it has been extended to its fullest reach, and nearly attained its utmost limits,*"—there is nothing wanting but a further continuance of the war, *even on the most economical and restricted scale*, to carry it beyond those limits; and to bring on those financial calamities, the operation of which has been uniformly found destructive to those political establishments by which they have been incurred.

But whilst the continuance of war, *under any system*, must inevitably add to our present burthens, it must at the same time operate so as to render us less able to bear them, by the inconveniences and disadvantages which it imposes upon that important portion of our revenue derived from our foreign trade. That we have not suffered so greatly from this cause as might have been expected, is to be attributed to the unremitting industry and perseverance of our merchants, who, as long as any possibility remained of maintaining a commercial intercourse with the continent, did not fail to avail themselves of it to the

fullest extent. Another aspect of affairs is now taking place ; the maritime states of Europe no longer retain even the form of independence, but are incorporated with the dominions of the conqueror, and the continent is to be hermetically sealed against the introduction of British merchandize.—This, then, has brought on a new crisis, the effects of which cannot, as yet, be fully estimated, although they are already too perceptible in the present state of the mercantile world. Whether such an attempt on the part of the French ruler can be successful, or whether the measures resorted to by our merchants will be found adequate to counteract their effects, yet remains to be tried ; but it cannot be doubted, that even if our adversary should fail in carrying his purpose fully into execution, he will succeed in throwing obstacles in the way of our commerce, and in adding to its risks, whilst he diminishes its extent. At the same time it is seriously to be lamented, that the means adopted in this country for carrying it on, and without which it has been found impracticable to counteract the precautions and restrictions of her enemies, are such as are highly injurious to the faith of either private or public transactions, and greatly derogatory to the national character. That these disadvantages are much increased by the effect of our

orders in council, and by the system of granting licences, so justly and so forcibly reprobated by Lord Grey, cannot be doubted. Under the modified system of hostility which he would approve, it may be presumed, that these injurious restrictions would be withdrawn; but it cannot be contended, that during a state of hostility, commerce can at all times be allowed its free operations; or that political objects will not frequently interfere, so as to render restrictions indispensably necessary, and to produce inconveniences and losses, for which it is impossible the adventurer can be repaid.

Nor is it difficult to perceive, that whilst a continuance of the war, *under a protracted system*, would afford us no effectual relief, it would at the same time leave us under the operation of some of the worst consequences attendant on a state of hostility. Such a war would be without ardour, and without hope.—Enterprise and conquest would be no more.—We might, indeed, prove to our enemy that “*we are able to maintain the honour and independence of our country against every attack that can be made against us,*” but we are to leave him in the full exercise of that power, which may enable him to renew the attack as often as he pleases; till at length, having shewn him that we are

invulnerable at all points, he desists, through mere weariness, from all further offence. If such be the mode recommended by his Lordship, it may with great truth be presumed, that the attempt to carry it into execution would be a perfect novelty in human affairs, and that of all countries on earth, this would be the least likely to adopt it. That the courage of our soldiers and our sailors, both passive and active, is great, has been sufficiently demonstrated; but whether it will ever arrive to such a pitch, as to induce them to suffer in patience every species of insult, indignity, and offence, without repaying it on the heads of their enemies, may yet admit of a doubt. Is it not obvious, then, that in the present state of the contest between this country and France, the expressions of *offensive* and *defensive war* are become convertible terms, and that there can be no definite limits prescribed between them? To defend ourselves effectually, we must disable our enemy from doing us further injury; we must avail ourselves of every opportunity of convincing him, not only that we are able to defend ourselves, but that he cannot attack us with impunity, and that we are no less prepared to strike, than we are to ward off a blow.

But it is unnecessary longer to dwell on the

effects of a system, which, even if it were shewn to be conducive to our interest, it is not in our power to adopt.—Will our adversary suffer us to measure out our hostility in such proportions as we may think proper?—To advance and retire at pleasure?—To take just as much or as little as we choose?—And to sport with war as with a child's toy? To that dreadful expedient recourse should never be had without the strongest necessity and the most awful deliberation; but when the decision is once made, every consideration, both of policy and humanity, requires that our utmost efforts should be devoted to compel our adversaries to submit to our just claims, and to terminate the calamities incident to the contest. That war, under every form, is an evil greatly to be deprecated, will readily be allowed, but when the passions are irritated by wrongs and inflamed by resentment; when to these are superadded the love of glory and the thirst of revenge, we feel, from the sentiments of our common nature, a sympathy with those who engage in the contest, which, in victory, elevates and expands, and even amidst defeat and slaughter, soothes and consoles the mind; but when these incentives are withdrawn; when the courage and ardour of the soldier are relinquished for a cold, calculating, and inextinguishable hatred; when valour and enterprise,

the shock of armies and the tented field, are no more, and a nation of warriors devotes itself to lie in wait for opportunities to attack the enemy with advantage, and to protract the calamities of war, we sicken at the cheerless and death-like prospect, and feel no emotions but those of horror and disgust.—From the infirmities of our nature, war, as an ultimate appeal, is at times inevitable ; but the common interest and the common consent of mankind, require that the struggle should be speedy and decisive, and that the miseries of those who suffer by its consequences, without being partakers in its guilt, should not be unnecessarily prolonged. The thunder may roll, and the bolt may fall ; but when the storm is past, let us hope once more to see the atmosphere clear, and to enjoy the brightness of day.—The calamities of the physical world are temporary. Earthquakes, plagues, and tempests, have their season ; but a protracted warfare is a perpetual earthquake, a perpetual pestilence, a perpetual storm ; and to propose to any people the adoption of such a system, is to propose that *they should resolve*, not only to live in sorrow, in wretchedness, and in peril themselves, but to entail the same calamities on their descendants.

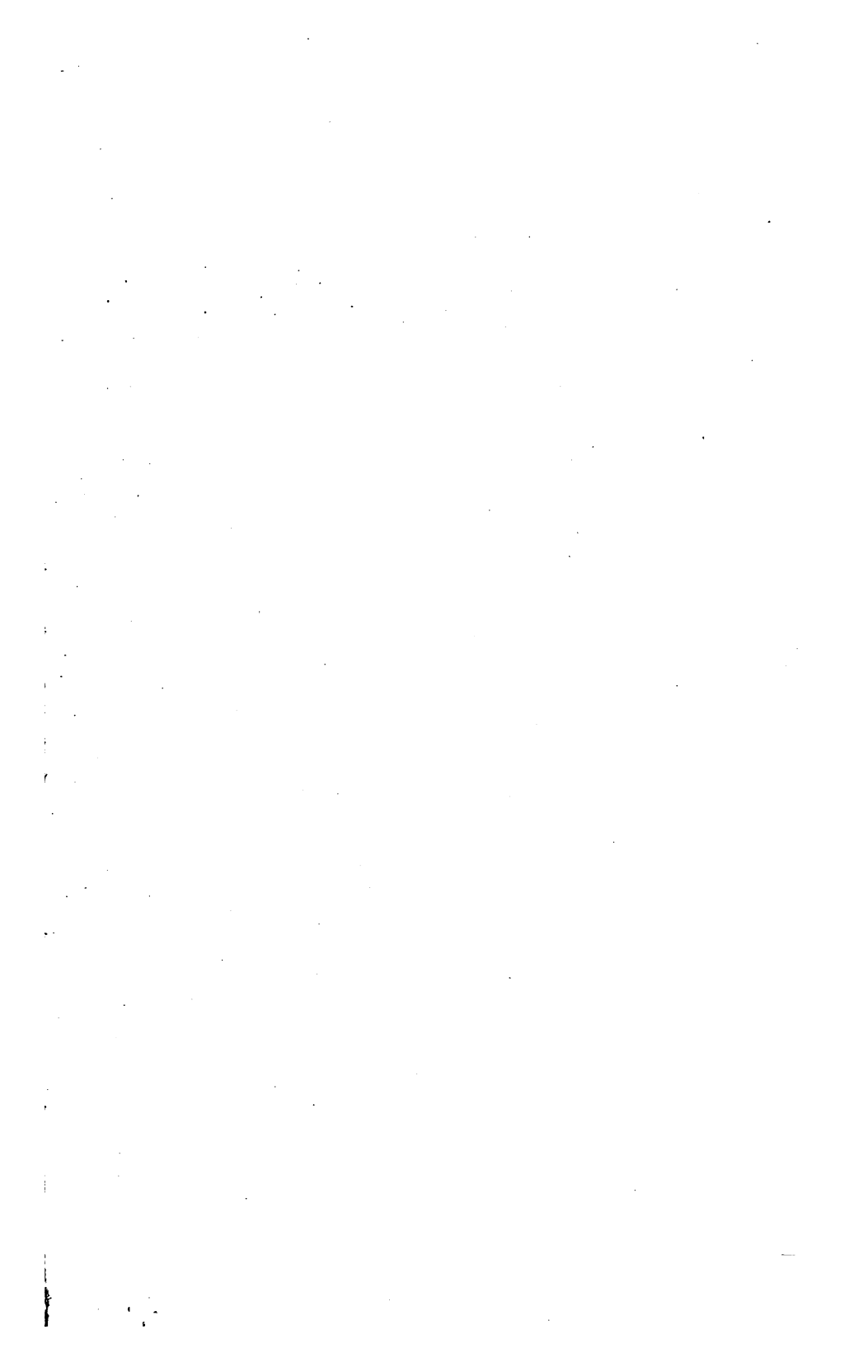
The apprehensions so generally entertained

in this country of the consequences of a peace with France, are rather the spectres of an inflamed imagination, than the legitimate offspring of reason and of truth. This will be the more apparent to any man, the more he will endeavour to analyze and define the vague, indistinct, and general positions of those, who contend for a continuance, *under some mode or other*, of the present war. Very evident, substantial, and immediate, are, on the contrary, the evils that must result from its further prosecution. However desirable it may be to this country to humble the power and pride of France, experience has shown that it is not by hostility that this is likely to be effected. War, it appears, is the element in which she lives, the nutriment on which she feeds; and whilst war continues, she will continue to invigorate and strengthen herself at the expence of surrounding states. If, in compliance with the plan proposed by Lord Grey, the war be conducted on our part with economy and caution, and be principally confined to a defensive system, *we shall only depress the spirit of the country, and prolong the anxiety and distresses of the people, by an inefficient, a protracted, and, in the end, a ruinous warfare.* If, on the other hand, we resort to measures of annoyance and attack; if we fit out expensive armaments, engage in hazardous expeditions, and subsidize

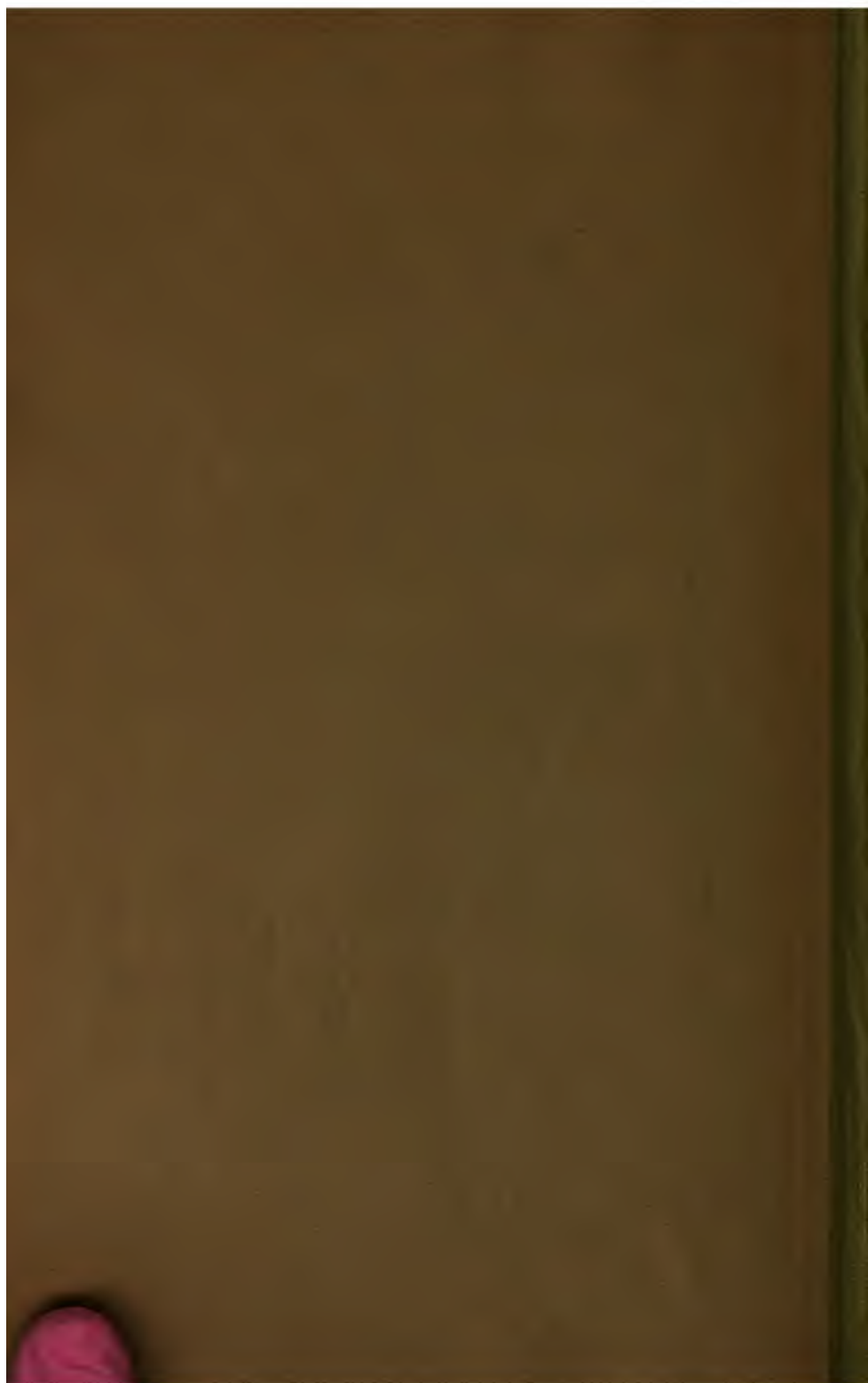
with immense sums every country that can be induced to oppose our enemy, *we must expect a repetition of the same misfortunes that we have heretofore experienced.* A long course of disastrous events has shown THAT IT IS NOT IN THE POWER OF THIS COUNTRY TO CONTROUL THE AFFAIRS, AND PRESCRIBE THE DESTINY OF EUROPE ; and that IT IS ONLY TO A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND A SEASON OF REPOSE, THAT WE ARE NOW TO LOOK FOR EFFECTUAL RELIEF.

FINIS.

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